THE ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

BY JAMES W. LINN

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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PREFATORY NOTE

Of making text-books on English Composition there is no end. The author of the work here offered consulted more than fifty, and might doubtless have consulted as many more. Yet he presents no apology for adding to the list. Some are too complicated to be helpful; others too dogmatic to be trustworthy; still others are highly valuable only as works of reference. Most are addressed either to the elementary student, to the proficient, or to the teacher. Diligent search throughout fourteen years' experience in teaching college freshmen classes has brought to the present author's notice not one book which meets the requirements of the students whom year after year he has faced. They ought not, perhaps, to need review of elementary details, but they do need it. They ought, perhaps, to be able to appreciate the finer matters of style, but they are not. This book seeks to give, in small compass, the information and direction which the average boy or girl of seventeen or eighteen, who has had the average training in composition in the grades and the high schools, needs to supplement and enliven his or her ability to write clear English. It is written as much to interest as to insist, as much to stimulate as to command. It gives few rules, and those simple; many suggestions, and those, it is hoped, clear. If it contains one sentence that needs explanation by a teacher, the author has so far failed of his intention. Any good teacher must elaborate, must

apply generalities to the individual instance, must effect by his personality what a text-book cannot effect; but the student has a right to demand, nevertheless, from his text-book statements that are accurate, helpful, and impossible to misunderstand. The author hopes that his book will meet just such demands.

The treatment of the whole composition is based on the idea that here thought, not phrasing, organization, not detail, is the important matter. The paragraph has been handled briefly because single paragraphs are subject to exactly the same laws as the whole composition, and paragraph division more certainly than anything else in composition is a matter for the individual judgment; this every one who has studied the history of the English paragraph admits. The discussion of the sentence is full, but compact and untechnical; it is more specifically a *review* than is anything else in the book, though the section on sentence-groups may offer the student fresh ideas. The word is considered first from the point of view of effectiveness, because the matter of propriety seems to the author, though highly important, not the most important matter. The section on punctuation is frankly review material. The discussion of the kinds of composition seeks to eliminate non-essentials and mere categories, and to concentrate the attention of the student on fundamental and important things.

Little use has been made of the terms unity, emphasis and coherence, so familiar to every teacher. Their introduction did much for the study of English composition. In preparatory school work the focussing of the student's attention upon them is wise. By college days, however, and even perhaps in the review year in the schools, the time arrives when the student must be allowed to realize that these terms are only means to an end, when his

interest must be stimulated to the end itself. Rules and terms, having served their purpose, give way to discussion and suggestion. When the well-known phrases fit the ideas presented here, the author has used them without hesitation, but he has not made them either his starting-point or his conclusion.

His thanks and appreciation are due to so many who have been of assistance to him, that enumeration would occupy too great a space. To Professor Barrett Wendell's *English Composition* and Professor Charles Sears Baldwin's various writings on rhetoric, he would gratefully acknowledge his debt; it is a debt common to all who teach the subject nowadays. His colleagues at the University of Chicago have been unwearied in friendly aid. In connection with the exercises, Miss Evelyn May Albright and Miss Gertrude Emerson have given help of a sort which the author could hardly have done without, and for which he here returns his warmest thanks.

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THE ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

PART I.

COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

SECTION I.

The Whole Composition.

1. **Essentials of Sound Composition.**—Literature is one of the fine arts; but everyday writing, as all of us are called upon to practice it, is a craft. Genius, which produces literature, is born in its possessor, and cannot be acquired; but the craft of writing can be learned by anyone, like carpentry or dancing. It is then not with the art of literature but with the craft of writing, often called composition, that this book, like other text-books, deals.

Four things are essential for sound composition:

1. Something to say.
2. The power to think clearly.
3. An understanding of the English sentence.
4. A good vocabulary.

2. **Something to Say.**—The first sounds simple. But it is nevertheless worth some consideration. Under what circumstances, outside of a class in English, do you ever write? When you have news to give, as in a letter; when you have information to give, and opinions to express, as in a report of work you have done; when your imagination is fired to tell a story. In every case, you base your writing on definite knowledge, or vivid imaginings. In every case, you write of something which *you know more*

about than your audience does. A letter which gave no news, a report which offered no information, a story which dealt with stale characters and incidents, you would not write.

Yet what do you do when you practise composition? Too often you write on subjects you know no more about than the audience does (the rest of the class). "Canadian Reciprocity," "Baseball," "Friendship," "Fishing," "The Pleasures of Vacation," "Oliver Goldsmith"—you cannot handle such subjects, because you have no special knowledge. If you do write on them, your work is dull, because you have nothing to say.

What then? There are two plans by which you may avoid this difficulty, both good.

1. *Write on whatever you have special knowledge of.*
2. *Get special knowledge of some subject and write on that.*

3. Writing Only from Special Knowledge.—The first is the simpler and perhaps the lazier. Everybody has special knowledge on certain subjects—the subjects that form the core of his experience and his interests. "What the Farmers of Ellendale, South Dakota, Think of Canadian Reciprocity" you may happen personally to know. "How to Play First Base" or "How to Manage a High-School Baseball Team," or, "Three Years on the Scrub Team" may fall right into your experience. "Three Good Friends of Mine," "Trotline Fishing in the Mississippi," "A Vacation in the Hayfield,"—such subjects you may have special knowledge of and can say something about. The details of the active interests of your life you are better able to write than anyone else can be. Some people are deterred from writing on such things because they believe "nobody is interested in anything I know anything about." The point of view is modest but absurd. You can rely on this: peo-

ple are much alike, and *what has interested you, no matter how trivial it may seem, will interest them.*

4. Getting Special Knowledge.—But to write only upon what you already know about is narrowing. Your business is to *get special knowledge of new matters.* What new matters? Whatever your occupation or your inclination dictate. If you are in school, your other courses offer you a wide field for composition. To state clearly in the English class the substance of your previous week's work in Zoology, in Civil Government, in German, is of double value—it fixes the information in your mind, and it trains your power of expression. Outside of the classroom your chief business is to acquire new knowledge of people, knowledge of methods of work, knowledge of current events. The effort to express this new knowledge in composition is essential. Until you can express it clearly, you have not acquired it. One who says, "I know it but I can't express it" is usually mistaken. So if you are desirous of learning about anything, like Kipling's mongoose "run and find out," and then mould and fix your new knowledge into that written form we call a "composition" or a "theme."

Your information will come, necessarily, either from your own personal investigation or from reading. To be able to gather information on complicated subjects from printed matter is most important.

Practice in investigation of this sort is indispensable to a student, and ought to be undertaken in every case, as a corollary of practice in writing. Subjects may be chosen at large; but it is well to relate them to what the student is doing in his classes. Such branches as history, political economy, political science, chemistry, physics, geology, botany, biology, offer endless possibilities of investigation; but work in languages, and in the English course itself, also gives many topics for research. A list of possible subjects is hardly worth giving; the best plan

is to consult the instructors of the various courses, who can not only suggest regions for exploration, but can start the student on the right road.

Subjects should be concrete. To consider the question of "Peace" would be futile, but information on "What was formally done in 1911 for the advancement of world peace" would be available and worth getting hold of. "Water Transportation *vs.* Railway Transportation" is too big to be looked up by the average freshman, but "Some specific objections to the Deep Water Way to the Gulf" could be well handled. "French Schools" would be an absurd subject; "How English is Taught in France," or "A Comparison of the French theme and the English theme" would not. "Glaciers" and "Monasticism" and "Paragraphing" and "Osmosis" tempt the young investigator to futility; but "The Early History of Artesian Wells in the United States," or "Monte Cassino" or "La Grande Chartreuse" or "A Discussion of Various Statements concerning the Proper Length of the Paragraph," or "Radium," do not. Let the topic be narrowed in consultation before investigation is begun.

The investigation itself begins with the acquisition of *general* knowledge on what the student is looking up. An encyclopedia, a large history, a text-book will give a start. Often suggestions may come from an instructor in the field to be surveyed. From such sources the student will learn (1) the outlines of his subject, (2) its relation to other subjects, (3) where to go for more special knowledge. Lists of references are subjoined to almost all articles in such general works. When all possible information has been secured from books, let the student turn to magazines. Such indices as Poole's or the American Library Association (A. L. A.) are available in every large library, and are often supplemented by others. Magazine material is indeed almost too easy to get hold of; it gives the student little chance to exercise his ingenuity. Familiarity with the methods of getting at it, however, is desirable.

Simply to read various books and magazines on your general topic is of course of little use. The problem is how most quickly and surely to discover the information you are searching for, and how to retain it for most convenient use. To save time, first skim rapidly through each chapter or article. Often the beginning of a paragraph, even the heading of a section, will

clearly indicate its lack of value for your purpose. When a prospector looks for gold, he first observes a locality as a whole. After your preliminary survey, go back to those paragraphs or, in a book, those chapters, that you have seen to bear particularly on your subject; and then, like the prospector, dig.

Like the prospector, also, assay. Use your judgment in reading; do not try to keep everything. Pure metal is rare, and you are looking only for that. Decide what is fact, what is opinion; do not note the opinion unless it be that of a recognized authority, who gives his reasons, and even then it is better to note only the reasons. Decide between unimportant, incidental facts, and facts of fundamental importance. Discard the unimportant. Note even the important facts as briefly as possible. The exact *words* of the author you are reading are not to your purpose, except as now and then you may wish to embellish by a quotation. In such a case you will of course not only use quotation marks, but give the name of him you quote. If you find a detail of so-called "human interest," it may be well to note it; even the most profound scientists realize the value of popular appeal.

In taking notes, *use cards.* On the card-system all modern big businesses, as well as most modern scholars, depend. Cards can be conveniently shuffled and arranged; the material in the old-fashioned "notebook" is hard to get at. Get cards, or make slips of stiff paper, half the size of this page. When you have secured your preliminary general information, try to analyze your subject; then put down every sub-head at the top of a separate card. As you read, note each fact of importance on its proper card. Your facts will come in helter-skelter; you must arrange them. If you meet, as you constantly will, some fact which fits none of your prepared cards, make a new card. Write out the headings of each one *clearly;* you will save yourself much trouble. Have plenty of cards; they are cheap, and cramped writing is hard to read. Shuffle your cards day by day as you go on, improving your order—and in all probability narrowing your topic.

Finally, do not expect to use all the notes you take. The lees of a wine-cask are undesirable. The most inspiring teacher is the man who has immensely more information than the giving of his course demands. Skim off for your readers the cream of what you know.

Such investigations as this should be part of the assigned work in every course in composition. Their results need not be written out in full. The student may hand in an outline of his intended paper, with the cards upon which his notes are arranged; or he may write out in full a part of his work, letting the outline indicate the rest. In all cases, definite citations should invariably be required. Every statement of fact should be traceable to its source. Thus comes, eventually, that train ing in "how to find out" which combines with good judgmen to mark the educated mind.

Exercise.

From the following list of topics choose three which lie well within your experience, and three which you would care to investigate further.

1. The principles of out-door cookery.
2. How to manage a high-school athletic team.
3. Running a school paper.
4. Oliver Goldsmith's humorous poetry.
5. "Earless on high sat unabashed Defoe"—who wrote it? why? and was it true?
6. Delivering daily newspapers.
7. A good system of football signals.
8. Training for the quarter-mile.
9. Was Macbeth a coward? Was Hamlet? Are they alike?
10. The chemistry involved in cooking an egg.
11. The habits of the redheaded woodpecker.
12. Learning to pronounce French.
13. The first novel I ever read, and the latest.
14. How I learned to shop.
15. The first railroad in the United States.
16. The guinea-pig—its name, its characteristics and its value
17. Learning to do housework.
18. Three people I used to know.
19. The principles of high-school debating.

5. The Power to Think Clearly.—The first necessity then is special knowledge of your subject. The second is *the power to think clearly*. Obviously, this power does not

come only from the study of English composition. Your work in mathematics, in history, in economics, your study of current events, every daily exercise of your mind has a direct bearing on your work in English. In composition you attempt to put into form and to express so that they shall be clear to others, the ideas you have gained, from whatever source they may have come.

What is this power to think clearly? It is the ability to perceive accurately the relationship of ideas. It is based on experience. A baby grasps a handful of snow and chills his fingers. He lets it drop, grasps another handful, and gets the same sensation. After that he will not touch the snow,—he has seen the relationship of snow to cold. Offer him a handful of cottonwool, and he will not touch that either. He has been misled into thinking *all* white soft stuff will hurt his fingers. He has perceived a relationship inaccurately.

From our babyhood, all our thinking, and all our expression, since expression is based on thinking, is the repetition and complication of this process. All of us employ it to some extent; we usually perform it unconsciously, but on its variety and accuracy depends our value to the world.

How do we employ this process in composition? By (1) Limitation, (2) Organization, (3) Development.

Note well:—These are all processes of *thought*, not of *phrasing*. They precede the actual writing. Indeed they are much broader in scope than composition is. A man who wishes to build up a business, or to plan a house, or construct a picture or a sonata, must employ them all. But they exhibit themselves with particular clearness in composition.

In actual composition these three work simultaneously. We do not as a rule first limit a subject, then organize it,

then develop it. But for purposes of analysis let us proceed as if this were our fixed order.

6. Limiting the Subject.—By *limitation* we mean fixing upon the particular parts we intend to consider of the general subject that has occurred to us.

Macaulay writes a history of England. He begins:

I purpose to write the history of England from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which is within the memory of men still living. I shall recount the errors which, in a few months, alienated a loyal gentry and priesthood from the House of Stuart. I shall trace the course of that revolution which terminated the long struggle between our sovereigns and their Parliaments, and bound up together the rights of the people and the title of the reigning dynasty. I shall relate how the new settlement was, during many troubled years, successfully defended against foreign and domestic enemies; how, under that settlement, the authority of law and the security of property were found to be compatible with a liberty of discussion and of individual action never before known; how, from the auspicious union of order and freedom, sprang a prosperity of which the annals of human affairs had furnished no example; how our country, from a state of ignominious vassalage, rapidly rose to the place of umpire among European powers; how her opulence and her martial glory grew together; how, by wise and resolute good faith, was gradually established a public credit fruitful of marvels which to the statesmen of any former age would have seemed incredible; how a gigantic commerce gave place to maritime power, compared with which every other maritime power, ancient or modern, sinks into insignificance; how Scotland, after ages of enmity, was at length united to England, not merely by legal bonds, but by indissoluble ties of interest and affection; how, in America, the British colonies rapidly became far mightier and wealthier than the realms which Cortes and Pizarro had added to the dominions of Charles the Fifth; how in Asia British adventurers founded an empire not less splendid and more durable than that of Alexander.

Thus Macaulay formally limits his subject. You will not usually state beforehand in this fashion the limits of

your own subjects. But you will follow the same plan that Macaulay followed. You will ask yourself three questions. (1) What do I know best about this general subject? (2) What in it most interests me? (3) What in it is likely to be of most interest to others? On the answers to these questions depends your limitation.

7. The Point of View.—Suppose you wish to write something about your preparatory school. In the first place, only the vague idea takes possession of you that at school you had an agreeable time and learned a good many things and made a good many friends, and inasmuch as you remember your experience with pleasure you would like to write about it. If at this point you actually begin to set your thoughts down on paper without further plan, you will discover very shortly that you have little or nothing to say, and you will conclude, therefore, that even though the subject appealed to you for a moment, it is really uninteresting and not worth while. You will be quite wrong. A subject of this sort drawn from an interested personal experience is very well worth while and you have a great deal to say about it, if you think the subject out.

Suppose you set down in the order in which they occur to you various points which seem of interest:

(1) The locality of the high school.
(2) Its success in athletics.
(3) Its system of student government.
(4) The many friends you made there.
(5) Particular teachers whom you liked or disliked.
(6) The debating society.
(7) The school dances.
(8) The school paper.
(9) The number of its graduates who have gone to college.
(10) The school spirit.

Already it becomes plain that there is more to write about than you have space to deal with. Out of the various things which suggest themselves to you some must either be omitted altogether or else passed over very briefly. Now you apply the principle, earlier stated, that you must have a definite knowledge of the subjects upon which you are going to write. About which of these ten points have you any definite knowledge? That is to say, which do you know in detail? If your interest was in athletics, you know definite details of athletics. So with debating. So with the school paper. Your knowledge of the school spirit is more likely to be general. Your knowledge of the peculiarities, agreeable and disagreeable, of various instructors, is definite enough, but on consideration you may feel that it is of no special importance. Since you cannot include everything in your paper, let your interests decide for you what you will retain.

Let us suppose (1) that you were an athlete. From the original list, then, you will omit the debating society and the school paper; probably the system of student government also, unless that system included the management of the athletic teams. Or perhaps (2) you were a hard student. Then you will include, probably, an account of particular teachers and their methods; speak of the graduates in college, the debating work, perhaps, and possibly the friends you made. If (3) your interest was more in the school as a whole, you will pass lightly over athletics and the debating society, and give your space to the matters, such as the teachers, your friends, the school paper, student government, and the school spirit, which concerned the whole student body. So whatever point of view you adopt (and the adoption of that point of view will depend on what your interests are, and what your definite knowledge is), you will proceed to select, out of everything that you can think of

about the general subject, those particular matters with which you are directly concerned.

This process of selection from a definite point of view precedes organization, and is of the utmost importance. Of course to anyone with a trained mind the process becomes very largely mechanical. The matters of importance and of interest arrange themselves unconsciously in his mind. His point of view, like some chemical reaction, affects their specific gravity and they inevitably bob up to the surface of his mind. But such a desirable state of affairs is brought about only by practice and training, and for a long time any composition must be preceded by the most conscientious and conscious thinking out.

8 Limiting the Subject to Suit the Audience.—In the second place your audience is a most important factor in limitation. Few write effectively unless they are writing *to somebody in particular.* In letters home about your school life you make changes in your material to suit the people you are writing to. Describing your first day at college to your father and mother, you limit yourself to your courses, your boarding place, your hopes and fears; writing about the same day to your high-school chum who has gone elsewhere you limit yourself to undergraduate life, the football prospects, a comparison of your new instructors with those in preparatory school: to a girl friend you would not speak of football, but would offer comment on college scenery and your own loneliness. So in all writing your audience affects the limitation of your subject.

Compare, for instance, (1) a discussion of the rules of baseball, intended to be clear to some intelligent Englishman who had never seen a game and did not understand its first principles, and (2) a discussion of the technic of first-base playing, intended to be of practical help to boys who had always played the game. The two would be very dif-

ferent in outline as well as in the quantity of information they undertook to give. Again, an explanation of the workings of an electric motor, meant for the general ignorant public, would differ in many respects from an explanation of the same motor addressed to a manufacturer whose shop was run by steam, and whom you wished to convert to the use of electricity. A description of the city of London which was intended to make a country boy understand its immense size and extent, would have comparatively few points in common with a description of London which was intended to make an Italian who had always lived in sunshine realize the fogginess and dirtiness of a great English city. An account of the starting of a fire company to a big fire might be written simply to interest and amuse people who like stories of vivid action, or it might be written to explain in detail the devices by which the company is enabled to leave the engine house within fifteen seconds of the turning in of the alarm; but the process of limitation would work to very different results in the two cases.

The object of limitation is two-fold: (1) to find a phase of your general subject which you can handle definitely in the space at your disposal, and (2) to put emphasis on what you think important, by excluding everything of minor value.

Exercise.

The following are possible limitations of the general topic, "My Reading." Each of them of course is subject to further limitation.

1. My reading when I was a child.
2. "Required Reading" in high-school English and its effect on me.
3. How I study a lesson in history.

4. My first novel and my latest.
5. How to read the newspaper.
6. My reading last summer.
7. My knowledge of the Bible.
8. What our Public Library has meant to me.
9. Shakespeare, G. A. Henty, and the "Elsie" books.

In the list subjoined, employ the same plan of limitation with at least three subjects.

1. Automobiles.
2. My interest in science.
3. Camping out.
4. My preparatory school.
5. Manual training.
6. Spending a vacation profitably.
7. College spirit.
8. Robert Burns.
9. Debating.
10. Entering college.
11. Disappointments.
12. Football.
13. Ivanhoe.
14. Farming.
15. Dormitory life.

9. Organization.—Knowing in general what you wish to write or speak of, then, you proceed to limit your subject. What follows? *Organization.*

Organization of any kind means putting material into good order; systematizing ideas. In composition it means arranging them so that the reader can go on easily from one to the next, and at the end understand precisely in what relation the ideas were meant to stand to each other and to the whole. At first subjects present themselves in a jumble. The untrained mind is something like the grab-bag at the old church socials. One put his hand in blindly and pulled out whatever he happened to

get hold of. Only by long practice can one arrange his knowledge, no matter how definite that knowledge may be, so that he makes his points effectively. Look at the following letter to a newspaper. The writer was indignant and enthusiastic; he thought he knew what he wanted to say; but what a halting, disorganized performance the letter is.

CHICAGO, *July* 17.

EDITOR of *The Tribune:*

Mrs. —— says in last Friday's issue "that the city is no place to keep dogs." Many people in this city have pets of various kinds. Some have pet dogs. We have always had a pet dog, and at no time have they ever bitten anybody or in any way disturbed other neighbors by night or day. We have always taken good care of them, not allowing them to run the streets at their pleasure, gave them enough food and water. To lock or tie a dog up all day and night is not necessary or just.

It is the abuse the poor dog gets from some thoughtless, selfish people that makes any dog vicious and go mad. Indeed, any human person would be likely to go mad almost to be so frequently abused and persecuted, hungry and thirsty, as most dogs are.

The ex-chief of police, Stewart, said: "The dogs have all my sympathy. Were the owners endowed with as much sense as their pets there would be no trouble. The owners of the animals are themselves to blame in all cases where they are held to account because of their dogs."

There are any number of people in and about Chicago who have no children and no pets of any kind—nor do they want you to have any. Nevertheless, it has been my experience that if an animal be properly taken care of—not abused—it will not be likely to harm or annoy anybody.

10. The Process of Organization.—In arranging your material, you must consider three things—(1) where and how to begin, (2) how to proceed, (3) where and how to end. Perhaps the only general rules that can be given are these:

(1) Begin promptly.
(2) Arrange your topics in a logical order.
(3) Have your end in mind from the beginning.

11. The Beginning.—Begin promptly. In short papers, avoid trying to make an "introduction." If your reader needs to know any general facts before he can understand what you are writing about in particular, give those facts, but only when it is absolutely necessary. Almost all unskilled writers begin too far back. Sir Walter Scott sometimes opens his novels by a sketch of his hero's great-grandfather, but he succeeded in being a great writer in spite of this habit, not because of it. Your business is to give the reader something of value he does not already possess. Do not bore him by putting in material he knows already, nor confuse him by including material which has no relation to your real point. Plunge in. An abrupt beginning is better than a dull one.

12. The Order of Topics.—Proceed in a definite order of topics, an order that you can honestly defend.

1. The simplest order perhaps is the *time-order*, the chronological. Especially helpful in narration, it is useful, however, in all kinds of writing. You may discuss the process of making a golf-club, of building a canoe, of learning to play tennis, of the development of your home town, and a thousand other things, chronologically.

2. The *space-order* is also simple and valuable. You treat of "The Technic of Line Play in Foot-ball" by considering first the centre, then the guards, tackles, ends. "The Structure of a Simple Gas-Engine" might be taken up in a space-order. "Making a Backyard Attractive" might be handled in either a space or a time-order. Space-order is usually associated with descriptive writing.

3. The *order of increasing importance*, or climax, is also constantly employed. You have three reasons why you

should be allowed to join a fraternity? Present them in the order of their importance, the most cogent last. "Odd Characters in Locustville" would be similarly presented. Whenever, as in these cases, any enumeration of sub-topics is possible, the order of importance becomes immediately a factor to be considered.

4. The method of procedure from the known to the unknown, the *order of increasing complication*, is often valuable. In many cases you must deal with matters of which your reader has no knowledge whatever. Suppose, for example, you write of "Lead-Mining in Southern Missouri." Most of us know nothing of lead-mining, but about coal-mining we are likely to have some information. If you begin by refreshing our memories by a brief statement of the principles of coal-mining, we shall be able to follow a comparison of the two. So scientists begin by laying down elementary principles, or pointing out elementary facts, from which they proceed to the more difficult and abstruse. This whole section (12) is an example of the order of increasing complication.

5. *The order of logical progress* is the most important of all in argument, and must frequently be taken into account in the other forms of composition. In this order, each step taken depends on the one which has preceded it. Suppose you are contending that your school should adopt the "honor system" in examinations. You may argue (1) that nobody will feel responsible unless he has responsibility placed upon him, (2) that the system of examinations under close supervision puts no responsibility on the student, (3) that the "honor system" does put responsibility on the student, (4) that only by the "honor system" can the student's sense of responsibility be developed. Here you have a logical *progress* from point (1)

to point (4). Again, take the old story of the missing horse-shoe nail that cost a kingdom (see p. 154).

13. The Ending.—Finally, know before you begin to write where and how you mean to end. What are you leading up to? In running the hundred-yard dash, you start quickly, settle into an even, steady pace, and just before you reach the tape put on your highest speed. Adopt the same system in your writing. But to do so, you must know from the start where you intend to finish. The composition that tapers into nothingness is all too frequent. It may be a story that starts bravely but lacks point; an argument that gets hold and then lets go; or an exposition that discusses one or two points fully and then concludes with half a dozen weak, disjointed, and undeveloped statements. That your work should be orderly is essential but not quite all-sufficient. It must also be firm, and for firmness a predetermined end is necessary.

Avoid, however, as a rule, a formal "conclusion," just as you avoid an introduction. In a long paper, of a thousand words or more, a summarizing statement at the end may be of value. In shorter compositions it is not often desirable. Before you begin decide just what your last point is to be, when you reach it develop it as freely and fully as any other, and then stop.

Exercise.

1. Indicate what order of arrangement might be followed with each of the subjects you have worked out from the exercise on page 15.

2. Write out the final paragraph *only* of a paper on one of these subjects.

14. The Relation of Topic to Topic.—The schemes for ordering a composition—the time-order, the space-

order, etc.—are alike in one fundamental principle—they are all logical. Your reader makes one demand on you always, that he shall be able to follow *without effort* each step in the progress of your ideas. Each point you discuss must have a clear and definite relation to the topic which has preceded it, as well as to the main subject. This is equally true whether you are telling a story, explaining a theory, describing a house, or convincing a skeptic. For discussions of this point in detail, see the sections dealing with the different kinds of composition. But certain illustrations may well be given here.

You are interested in the general matter of debating; you have determined to limit your subject to "The Management of a High-School Debating Contest." You may proceed chronologically—(1) Preliminary Negotiations, (2) Choosing a Question, (3) Selecting a Team, (4) Preparing to Debate, (5) Getting the Judges, (6) The Night of the Contest. This is plain enough; each point follows in clear relation of time. No one would so violate logic as to put (6), say, between (1) and (2), or (5) between (3) and (4).

But let us take a more complicated case. Suppose you, the business manager of a school paper, wish to sell a man advertising space. You advance certain reasons why he should buy—you have an intelligent if not a very large circle of readers, your space is not expensive, as an alumnus he ought to support the college activities, the goods he deals in are much needed by students in particular, and other advertisers have found your paper a good medium. If you present the arguments in this hit-or-miss order, you fail to make much effect. You must organize them. Evidently the order of time will not work here; nor the order of space. How about the order of importance? What is here most important is hard to say, but let us assume the following to be a fair arrangement:

(1) As an alumnus he ought to support college activities.
(2) You have an intelligent if not a large circle of readers.
(3) The goods he deals in are much needed by students in particular.
(4) Your space is not expensive.
(5) Other advertisers have found your paper a good medium.

This would serve. But it can easily be improved. What factors are involved in the case? Your paper and this particular advertiser. Of the arguments advanced, which apply to the paper in general, and which to this particular advertiser? (2), (4) and (5) to the paper in general; (1) and (3) to this particular advertiser. Suppose then the arrangement be:

(1) You have an intelligent if not a large circle of readers.
(2) Your space is not expensive.
(3) Other advertisers have found your paper a good medium.
(4) As an alumnus he should support college activities.
(5) The goods he deals in are much needed by students in particular.

You have really, of course, reduced your main topics to two, (1) the paper's general claim, (2) its claim on this particular advertiser, and then subdivided these topics. But the effect is of complete rearrangement of the original five reasons.

Suppose again, as a student in American history, you are asked to give an analysis of the character of Andrew Jackson—not an account of his life, which would of course be chronological, but an analysis of his character. You know him to have been obstinate, quick-tempered, a great military leader, imperious, courageous, uneducated, a rough-and-tumble fighter, and devoted to his

wife. How are you to combine these? Some are qualities of his nature, others are results of his characteristics or his life.

obstinacy	military achievements
temper	lack of education
imperiousness	interest in fighting
courage	
devotion to wife	

Now plainly his lack of education precedes everything else. His imperiousness is the result of his obstinacy, courage, and quick temper, and it is in sharp contrast to his devotion to his wife. On the other hand, it connects itself with his rough-and-tumble fighting and his military achievements. Let us try, on this basis, the following arrangement:

(1) Jackson's lack of education.

(2) The fundamental elements of his character—obstinacy, courage, quick temper,—which made him an imperious man.

(3) Jackson as a fighter—rough-and-tumble, and military power.

(4) In contrast, his devotion to his wife.

To this, the objection would be urged that it strikingly violated the order of importance, because Jackson's devotion to his wife was by no means the most noteworthy thing in his character. Shall the objection be met by putting (4) after (2)? No, because this separates his imperiousness from its natural result, his love of fighting. After consideration we see that (4) is one of the elements of Jackson's character, and may therefore be included under (2). Put first under that head, it does not interfere with the essential connection of (2) and (3). So we get as a working plan of topics:—

(1) Jackson's lack of education.

(2) The fundamental elements of his character—devotion, but in contrast, obstinacy, courage, quick temper, which made him imperious.

(3) Jackson as a fighter.

Studying further into the man's ways, getting more information, of course we should modify this outline. But in modifying it we should use the same process—applying general principles of order, and continually watching to see that each topic stood in clear and definite relation to the rest.

15. Outlines.—Such an arrangement of topics, or analysis of a subject, is preliminary to all good writing. By skilled writers it is unconsciously kept in mind; the unskilled should make it on paper. Outlining, in other words, is essential. An outline has a double value; it enables you to see more clearly where your ideas are ill-arranged, and it enables you to keep some definite arrangement firmly before you. Two kinds of outlining are feasible—outlining by topics, and outlining by heads and subheads.

The first consists merely of stating, in their order, the various major points with which your composition is to be concerned. Examples of such outlines are those on p. 20 (Advertising in a School Paper) and on p. 22 (Andrew Jackson). The form is a simple one and of considerable value. Often each topic considered may be handled in a separate paragraph, and the likelihood of effective paragraphing be thus increased.

But the only thoroughly satisfactory form of outline for practice is an extension of this topical form—an analysis, by heads and subheads, of the whole intended composition. Let us see by way of example an outline of the subject, Taking Notes in a Lecture-Course.

I. The Résumé:
  (A) Definition.
    (1) Includes only main topics and conclusions.
    (2) Not more than 300 words long.
    (3) Written after class.
  (B) Value.
    (1) Puts emphasis on important things.
    (2) Trains the mind.
  (C) Defects.
    (1) Difficult to do well at first.
    (2) Not always practicable.

II. Taking Notes in Class.
  (A) What to take.
    (1) Why not take everything?
      (a) Not everything is important.
      (b) The effort to take everything deadens the mind.
        (x) The judgment is not exercised.
        (y) The memory is not exercised.
    (2) Important matters are:
      (a) References.
      (b) Topics.
      (c) New facts used as evidence.
    (3) Unimportant matters are:
      (a) The lecturer's personal opinions (unless emphasized).
      (b) Anecdotes and fine phrases.
  (B) How to take it.
    (1) Use a loose-leaved notebook.
    (2) Leave a margin.
    (3) Write down only important words—do not try to write sentences.

Such an outline as this seems at first sight a trifle complicated. But to make one like it, of a subject you know well, is easy provided you follow one fundamental rule.

Take one step at a time. First divide your main topic into subheads.

Main Topic—How to take Notes.
Subheads { I. The Résumé.
II. Taking Notes in Class.

Then take one subhead, consider it as your topic, and divide it.

Topic—The Résumé.
Subheads { A. Definition.
B. Value.
C. Defects.

Then take each of these in turn, consider it as your topic, and divide it.

Topic—Definition.
Subheads { 1. Includes only main topics and conclusions.
2. Not more than 300 words long.
3. Written after class.

Topic—Value.
Subheads { 1. Puts emphasis on important matters.
2. Trains the mind.

So you proceed step by step. You do not try to keep everything in your mind at once. The analysis grows finer and finer, but the process is identical throughout.

In conclusion, this fact may be re-stated: You cannot make an effective outline of material which you do not thoroughly know. For an outline is only your organization in graphic form; and knowledge must precede organization always.

EXERCISE.

A. Arrange the following topics in some sound and logical order.

General subject, "Why I Came Here to College." Because the principal of my high school urged me, my father was willing to send me, I have an aunt living in this city, I hope some day to teach, I wanted to make new friends, this college has a good reputation, there are splendid chances here to earn part of my way, my father was a college man himself, and as luck would have it, the job I expected to take for this year fell through.

B. Analyze two of the following subjects, and arrange the result of your analysis by heads and subheads.

1. My impressions of college life so far.
2. Shall I join a fraternity?
3. Why I prefer athletics to general reading (or vice versa).
4. How to sell books (or whatever you are competent to sell).
5. My own character.
6. How to study botany (or whatever you have best succeeded in).
7. A novel I enjoyed.
8. What manual training has done for me.
9. Why I mean to study law (engineering, medicine).
10. Our street.

16. Development.—So far, of the processes of thinking out what one wishes to say, we have discussed *limitation* and *organization*. We come now to the process of *development*.

17. Development a Matter of Details.—Development, as here used, means making each successive topic taken up *clear in detail*. Suppose you wish to explain your system of taking notes in a lecture-course. You might organize your material thus:—

1. One very good way of taking notes is to write out after class a brief résumé of the lecture.

2. Often this is not practicable.

3. To attempt to note down everything is bad.

4. The order of importance to be observed in writing things down is (a) references, (b) topics, (c) facts, (d) the lecturer's opinions.

5. Various devices save time and effort in note-taking.

Here are five points. They are more or less suggestive to the reader, but not yet clear. How shall they be made clear? Let us consider them in order.

1. *A very good way of taking notes is to write out after class a brief résumé of the lecture.*

What is a résumé? How long should it be? Why is this a good way? If the discussion of this point is to be clear, these questions, which occur to every reader, must be answered. Therefore you write:—

An excellent plan for taking notes in a lecture-course is the following: Set down nothing, or very little, while the lecture is going on, devoting instead all your energy to listening. Immediately after class, write out in, say, three hundred words, a résumé of the lecturer's remarks. Such a résumé will include only the topics discussed and the conclusion reached. The student following out this plan forces himself to listen carefully, and to analyze the speaker's ideas; he trains his own memory and he develops his own power of expression. Limited as he is in space, he will not be tempted to include unimportant matters, while at the same time he will be compelled to exercise his judgment concerning what is important. If he makes these résumés carefully and sensibly, he will have at the end of the course a group of compact statements, review of which is easy and yet entirely sufficient for the student's purpose.

2. *Often this is not practicable.* Here the reader's one question will be,—Why not?

But often this plan is impracticable. In the first place, it really takes some training:—few students can employ it satisfactorily without preliminary trial. And in the second place, of course, classes often follow one immediately after another, without time intervening to write out such résumés.

3. *To attempt to note down everything is bad.*

Here again, the reader's questions are,—Is such a thing possible? and if so, why is it bad?

If, then, one is forced to take his notes in the class-room, what shall he do? Shall he try to note down everything? A stenographer of course could do so, and some actually perform the feat. But such a plan usually involves a great waste of energy, besides utterly failing to train the mind. It is a waste of energy, because not everything the lecturer says is important. His introductory remarks, for instance, his illustrative anecdotes, his incidental opinions,—the packing he uses to keep the machinery of his thought from rattling—take up a good deal of space, but they are not often worth the effort of transcribing, and, much more important still, such literal transcription deadens the mind, not develops it. The student who takes notes in this way becomes as mechanical as his fountain pen. He exercises no faculties of either judgment or memory. At the end of the course he has stowed away in a drawer a heavy mass of more or less useful information (in most cases easily accessible elsewhere), but he has made no progress toward the end for which the class was designed—toward learning to think.

4. *The order of importance to be observed in writing things down is* (a) *references,* (b) *topics,* (c) *facts,* (d) *the lecturer's opinions.*

Once more, obvious questions occur to the reader. Exactly what is meant by references, topics, facts, opinions? Why is the order given the best order?

If, then, not all is to be noted, what shall be chosen? Certain things *must* be noted. Among them are whatever references to other writers the lecturer gives in support of his main ideas, and even in support of minor matters. Memory will not serve unaided to keep such things in mind, and yet for any concrete review of the lecturer's ideas, in the mind they must remain. Note must be taken also of the main topics of the lectures. From any clear lecture these topics will emerge; if the lecture is not clear, the student has all the more chance to exercise his judgment. Heads and subheads may not be enumerated by the lecturer, but they will exist, and good notes will show them in their order.

Out of the mass of the lecture, too, some facts may be noted —chiefly such as are wholly new to the student, and are introduced as evidence. Of course, too, in a lecture on mathematics, chemistry, physics, and kindred subjects, in which formulæ are involved these formulæ must often be preserved. But ordinarily, of the set of facts offered, the student should note few. Having his topics, having his references, he can later, if need be, refresh his memory. And what the lecturer personally thinks, offers, that is, as incidental opinion, may usually without loss be omitted from a student's notes. If the lecturer considers the opinion of value, he will enlarge upon it, make it a considerable point of his lecture; if he does not, the student need not seek to transcribe it. A good rule is, to omit any statement not given as a head or subhead of the lecture, unless the lecturer thinks it so important that he repeats it. In your notes, you will thus follow his own unconscious distribution of emphasis.

5. *Various devices save time and effort in note-taking.* Here the reader's one question is, What devices?

In all note-taking, the student should remember, first, that nine times out of ten it is the substance, not the wording, which is important for him, and second, that his memory, if he gives it something by way of support, may be trusted to carry along the connection of ideas. A lecture on Coleridge might be followed thus:—Precocious boy—his eccentric father—great reader —Christ's hospital—friendship with Lamb—shows great ability and great impulsiveness early—runs away from college—Southey and Pantisocracy (see Traill, p. 13)—odd marriage—irresponsible career (journalist, lecturer, diplomatist at Malta, etc.)—takes opium for dyspepsia—walking both sides of path—friends forced to care for him—at Highgate (see Carlyle, *John Sterling*, chap. 5).

Such notes as these would even after months or years be suggestive and intelligible to anyone who had heard the lecture.

Abbreviation of words is so easy that it can readily be carried too far. Among other things, it makes the notes unintelligible to any but the writer. It is better to pick few but important words and write them out. An admirable plan is to leave a margin at the left, and when the lecturer ends a subdivision of his remarks, sum up your paragraph of notes in a marginal sentence. A loose-leaved notebook is the most satisfactory because it is convenient, and because notes for allied courses can subsequently be enclosed in one cover.

18. **The Methods of Development.**—Here, then, you have a possible development of each topic of your general subject, "How to Take Notes in the Class-Room." This development consists in *thinking out the questions each topic would suggest to the reader, and answering them in detail.* It may involve *definition* (a brief general statement of the underlying principle of the matter under discussion), *examples* (concrete instances of the general statement), *comparison or contrast* (showing in the matter discussed the elements of likeness to or difference from something else with which the reader is familiar) and *repetition*—(saying a thing more than once, in different words).

19. **Significance of Material.**—Some or all of these methods you must employ, suiting them to your purpose. Your success or failure will depend principally on the *significance* of the material you use—*its importance for your readers.* A definition which does not really define, really make the underlying principle clear, is valueless. Concrete examples are of the very highest importance. Few of us can reason in abstractions. To say of a boy, "He is likely to fail in life because he does not carry through his good impulses," is to be fairly clear; but to add, "He studies hard the first two months, and loafs after Thanksgiving. He buys an alarm-clock and forgets to wind it. He writes to his sister on her birthday and does not send the letter because he has run out of stamps"—this is to be clearer still.

The more concrete examples are, the better. But concrete examples, to be effective, must be *real* instances of what you mean. So again with comparisons and contrast. If the relationship brought out is with something the reader knows, and is really apt—as when Victor Hugo likens the battlefield of Waterloo to a great letter A,—then comparison and contrast help our understanding wonderfully. The statement that the action of a steam-engine is like that

of a pump reversed has assisted many an unscientific mind to comprehend the principle of the steam-engine. But the value of the comparison does not lie in the fact that it *is* a comparison, but in that it is *a significant comparison*, one that means something definite to any reader. The problem of development then resolves itself into this: *To think out what a reader really would like to know about each of your principal statements, and to tell it in significant detail.*

20. **Arrangement of Details.**—That the details of each developed topic must be arranged as carefully as the topics themselves, is a point never to be forgotten. Perhaps unskilful writers become confused more frequently here than anywhere else. They write upon subjects they know something about; they get a sound general plan of arrangement; but they fail because they do not carefully apply any principle of order in the development of each successive topic. A whole composition is from one point of view really a group of smaller compositions, each of which must be solidly organized. But the discussion of this point really belongs in the discussion of the paragraph; see p. 37.

21. **Proportion.**—Finally, with this matter of development is bound up the principle of proportion. How shall you decide what space to give to each topic—whether to develop it freely and at length, or just sufficiently to make your point? Your own judgment of the relative importance of the different topics is the deciding factor. True, some comparatively unimportant points may be so complicated or so unfamiliar to your audience that to make them clear you must explain them at length; and on the other hand a most important matter may be too well known to require elaboration. Generally, however, *your readers will take the amount of space you give each point for your own estimate of its relative importance.*

SECTION II.

The Paragraph.

22. What is Paragraphing?—It is plain from the discussion so far that no composition of any length is an undivided unit. Your subject, as you consider it in your own mind, splits up into topics; these topics often split again into smaller sub-topics. For the reader's convenience, you are expected to make plain by a mechanical device just what these topics and sub-topics are. This mechanical device, which consists of deeply indenting the first line which concerns the new topic, is called paragraphing. Paragraphing is of less importance than sound arrangement of topics and an understanding of sentence-structure. It concerns written composition only, whereas power to develop your ideas and a knowledge of sentence-structure are equally necessary to both writing and speaking. Good paragraphing, however, is of great help to any reader. To some extent also, paragraphing is a matter which might be called good form in composition; that is to say, it is governed by convention, and if you violate the conventions of paragraphing you are thought ignorant, just as you are if you violate any other convention.

A paragraph, it is plain, must usually be considered from two points of view. First, is it an effective treatment of the topic with which it deals? Second, is it in a clear relation to the whole composition of which it forms a part?

23. The Length of the Paragraph.—The theory of paragraphing is that each paragraph should deal with a particular and definite part of the main subject, and with

that part only. When the writer passes on from this to another part of his subject, he makes a new paragraph, and so notifies the reader that he means to deal with a new point. The indentation of the paragraph rings a bell in the reader's mind, warning him to be specially attentive. Now it will be plain that if this bell is rung every two or three lines, its warning must become monotonous and ineffective. If again a very long time passes between warnings, the reader's attention is likely to drowse. Therefore convention joins common-sense to suggest a reasonable length for paragraphs, a length which gives opportunity to develop an idea freely, but does not weary the reader to inattention. This length is in most good newspaper or magazine writing from one hundred to four hundred words, and, usually, nearer one hundred than four hundred. Examples of paragraphs much longer can be cited—compare, for instance, Green's *Short History of the English People*—but such huge units are not desirable of imitation.

24. Length in Relation to Paragraph-Topics.—It is not to be supposed that you can meet the demands of good, that is to say helpful, paragraphing merely by dividing your paper into chunks of one to four hundred words. Each paragraph must be on a definite topic, and organized precisely, though on a smaller scale, as the whole composition is organized. But what shall be the topics of the successive paragraphs? To some extent your choice is determined by the convention of length.

Take a very simple example; you may be writing on "Three Friends of Mine." Obviously you might divide your paper into three paragraphs. But if your paper were of seven or eight hundred words, you might wish to make more than three paragraphs. You could then use the following as topics: (1) My First Friend's Life and Character. (2) His Influence on Me. (3) My Second Friend's Life

and Character. (4) His Influence on Me. (5) My Third Friend's Life and Character. (6) His Influence on Me. The demand of your readers that every paragraph should be on a definite and clear topic would thus be met; but you would have six shorter paragraphs instead of three longer ones.

25. Emphasis in Relation to Paragraph-Topics.— A factor more important than length in determining your choice of paragraph topics should be your desire to emphasize certain points. This is a phase of the question of *Proportion*, already mentioned on page 31. Suppose you are trying to get an old chum to join you at college. You write both to him and to his parents, and the general plan of your letter is the same in both cases.

1. He can get here just the education he needs.
2. He can make friends who will be valuable to him.
3. He can have a pleasant time.
4. He can afford it.

But in writing to the boy himself you would perhaps divide thus:

1. You can get the education you need, and make valuable friends into the bargain.
2. You can have a good time socially.
3. You can play on one of the athletic teams.
4. You can get into an excellent fraternity.

On the other hand, in writing to his parents, your division might be:

1. He can get just the general education he needs.
2. He can specialize to great advantage in engineering.
3. He can make valuable friends and have a pleasant time.
4. Expenses are low here.
5. He can earn part of his way.

You wish, in other words, to throw the emphasis on different matters, in the two cases; and, accordingly, you give a greater development to the matters you wish to emphasize.

26. The Topic-Sentence.—Both for the convenience of the reader and for the guidance of the writer, the topic of a paragraph is often stated in so many words; sometimes at the end, but most commonly near the beginning. Such a topic-sentence, as it has been called, may be thought mechanical, but it is extraordinary how constantly clear writers use it. Bryce in his *American Commonwealth*, for example, and John Richard Green and Macaulay in their histories of England, almost invariably employ topic-sentences.

Successive paragraphs in Green's *History of the English People* dealing with the development of English literature in the reign of Queen Elizabeth begin as follows:

(1) The full glory of the new literature broke on England with Edmund Spenser.

(2) The appearance of *The Faerie Queene* is the one critical event in the annals of English poetry. It settled, in fact, the question whether there was to be such a thing as English poetry or not.

(3) The poem expressed, indeed, the very life of the time.

(4) If *The Faerie Queene* expressed the highest elements of the Elizabethan age, all of that age, its lower elements and its higher alike, was expressed in the English drama.

(5) Few events in our literary history are so startling as this sudden rise of the Elizabethan drama.

Now anyone who reads over these sentences will be struck by two things: first, that each sentence sets down in an unmistakably clear fashion a topic which is to be made comprehensible by development; and second, that these topics as here set down are, without the change of a word, in a perfectly clear relation to each other. They read as

coherently as if each had been originally made to follow its predecessor. And yet in Green's *History* sentence 1 is developed in 500 words, sentence 2, in 250, sentence 3, in 1300, sentence 4, in 900, and sentence 5, in 900. In other words, these five sentences which read so coherently are in the original developed without an unnecessary detail into 3850 words! Of course this is the writing of a trained author and a careful thinker. But inevitably all good writing, except narrative, tends to develop itself around topic-sentences in the paragraph; or rather, the tendency is strong in all good writing to express the idea of each paragraph in a topic-sentence so formed as to connect itself readily with the topic-sentence of the paragraph which follows.

Let us take another example. The first daily paper at hand has for its first editorial the subject, "Reciprocity Now, or an Extra Session?" There are four paragraphs. They begin as follows:

(1) The Washington dispatches describe a well-nigh hopeless situation for the enactment of Canadian reciprocity at this session of Congress.

(2) The men of influence in the country should give this matter their immediate attention.

(3) Failure to enact now evidently involves an extra session.

(4) What say our great business interests to such a prospect?

These topics are developed respectively in 125, 125, 150, and 60 words. The elaboration is briefer but the relationship of topic to topic is just as clear as in the example cited from Green's *History*.

Evidently, therefore, in all writing which is meant primarily to be clear, this method of making a succession of points plain may be adopted. In narration, however, such formal statement of a topic is not often made. Events fol-

low one another in the simplest of all orders, the chronological, and the reader grasps their relationship so easily that he resents the interruption of a topic-sentence.

Exercise.

Suggest paragraph-topics for 700-word papers on such of the following subjects as you are able to write about. Write a topic-sentence for each paragraph.

1. How my interest has developed in debating (or violin playing, or domestic science, or whatever you may be interested in).
2. The Children's Crusade.
3. Braddock's defeat.
4. The formation of glaciers.
5. My best day last summer.
6. If some one gave me a million tomorrow.
7. A summary of a recent lecture.
8. Impressions of college up to the present time.
9. Some features of my own town.
10. Dormitory life.
11. The longest walk I ever took.

27. Arrangement of Material in the Paragraph.— A good topic will no more insure a sound paragraph, however, than a good subject will insure a sound composition. Think each paragraph out, remembering the principles of order. Organize each paragraph as if it were a separate brief composition in itself.

Suppose you are writing on the management of a high-school dance. Your first paragraph is on the organization of the preliminary committees, and in that paragraph you wish to discuss three points: (1) How large each committee should be, (2) whether the chairmen should be boys or girls, and (3) how many committees will be needed. A moment's thought will show that this order as given is illogical.

The first question is the number of committees needed, the second is the size of the committees, and the third is their organization. Unless the points in the paragraph are handled in this order, the paragraph will be confused.

As the paragraphs of the untrained writer are frequently confused, so are they frequently unemphatic. Even the topic-sentence, valuable device as it is, has often the defect of unbalancing the emphasis. You make the statement of your topic at the beginning of the paragraph, and then trail off into weakness. Proper emphasis in the paragraph, as in the whole composition, can be secured only by careful arrangement. The value of a firm ending is second only to the value of a clear beginning. Compare the following:

I began now gradually to pay off the debt I was under for the printing-house. In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I dressed plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a-fishing or a-shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal; and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores through the streets on a wheel-barrow. Thus being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duty for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, *and I went on swimmingly.* (Franklin's *Autobiography;* adapted.)

One of the most frequent questions in arranging the material in a paragraph is, What shall I do with such and such a point, which is essential, but not big enough to deserve a paragraph to itself? For instance, you are writing on the commission form of government for municipalities. You have paragraphs on its birth, its early development, and so on, and you have come to the matter of

its relation to the allied scheme of the "initiative and referendum." You feel that you ought to explain what the "initiative and referendum" are, but that you should be brief about it, for it is not principally the "initiative and referendum" that you are interested in, but its close relation in general to the commission form of government. How shall you build into a paragraph on this relation some account of the "initiative and referendum" itself? Note the following:

It is plain that the commission form of government is planned to make a small body wholly responsible for the municipal government. Out of a realization that such complete responsibility might develop into tyranny has come the general habit of associating with the commission form of government the scheme of the "initiative and referendum." According to this scheme a certain percentage of voters may by petition *initiate* legislation, that is to say, offer an ordinance for the commission to vote upon; and on the other hand any important change in legislation must be *referred* to the voters, who at a special election accept or reject it. The "initiative and referendum" is not, however, necessarily a part of the commission idea. It is not used for instance in Denver, which is under commission government, and it is used in many cities which are not managed by the commission system. The likelihood that centralized responsibility will result in tyranny seems to be guarded against by the possibility of frequent elections, and by the arrangement which makes all meetings of the commission public.

It seems plain that this "building in" of a topic can be managed, if the demands of proportion (p. 31) are taken into account.

28.—The Relation of the Paragraph to the Whole.— As has been said, a paragraph occupies a double relation: it is a composition in itself, but it has also a connection with a larger composition of which it is a part. It is your business as a writer to make this connection too clear to be misunderstood. If you have properly organized your

ideas, most of your trouble is over, to be sure; but not all. When an architect designs a building, he indicates what the shape of the larger stones is to be, and the order in which they are to be laid. They come numbered, and are put in place accordingly; but to keep them in place something more,—steel wire, or cement, is needed. So with your paragraph. Your right order must be supplemented by words, phrases, even whole sentences, employed merely for holding purposes—the cement of composition.

Sometimes, as often in simple narration, no such devices are needed; the events of each paragraph follow obviously upon those of the preceding paragraph. But in most writing, the opening sentence of the paragraph is made to hook on, by some method, to what has just preceded. Compare the sentences cited from J. R. Green on page 35; compare also the following succession of sentences from Macaulay's *History of England:*

1. Unfortunately the population of England in 1685 cannot be stated with perfect accuracy.
2. We are not, however, left without the means of correcting the wild blunders into which some minds were hurried. There are extant three computations. . . .
3. One of these computations was made in the year 1696.
4. About the same time King William III . . .
5. Lastly, in our own days, Mr. Finlaison . . .
6. Of these three estimates . . .

It is plain that in every case Macaulay uses the opening sentence of each paragraph to show the relation of that paragraph to what has gone before. The ways of indicating this relationship may be classified under five heads:

1. Sentences used exclusively for purposes of *sub-connection.*

Let us now leave the subject of fly-casting, and consider fishing with worms.

2. *Relation words.* These are words indicating merely sequence, such as *first, secondly, finally, next, furthermore, again;* words of contrast, such as *but, notwithstanding, however, on the contrary, on the other hand;* words indicating cause and result, such as *therefore, hence, because, for, consequently, on account of.* A vocabulary of such words and phrases is essential. For the position of such words in the sentence, see page 74.

3. *Reference words.* Such reference words, pronouns and pronominal adverbs and adjectives, carry back the mind to what has just been said.

One of *these* computations was made in the year 1696 . . . About *the same time* King William . . .

4. *Repetition.* Repetition of words or phrases carries the mind back, as reference does, to some previous statement.

There are *three computations* . . . One of these *computations* . . . Of these *three* estimates . . .

5. *Special order of words and phrases.* By the use of some special order of words in the opening sentence of a paragraph, its relation to what has gone before is frequently emphasized. Suppose you have a paragraph on reading aloud as a help in understanding sentence-structure. Your next paragraph may begin: *There are, however, other advantages to be gained from such a practice.* The relation will be fairly clear. But it will be still more clear i the second paragraph begins: *Other advantages, however, there are to be gained from such a practice.* Here the words *other advantages,* placed at the beginning of the sentence, tack on so closely to the preceding paragraph that nobody can miss the connection.

SECTION III.

The Sentence.

29. What the Sentence Is.—A sentence is most commonly defined as the grammatically complete expression of a thought. It demands a subject and a predicate, both usually expressed, one sometimes only implied. The reader demands from a sentence just what he demands from a paragraph and a whole composition,—a clear and definite idea. In the sentence, as in the whole composition and the paragraph, this clear and definite idea may be made up of lesser ideas. "*The dog runs*" is clear and definite; "*the little brown dog runs with a stick in his mouth*" is equally clear and definite, though complicated by more than one thought. "*Many had been killed*" is clear and definite; so is "*many more had been wounded*"; so is "*a very large number had deserted.*" Let us put these three statements into one sentence. "*Many had been killed, many more had been wounded, and a very large number had deserted.*" The combination is clear and definite; the lesser ideas sum up to equal the statement that *the army was in bad condition.*

A sentence then is not necessarily the expression of a single thought, but the expression of a group of thoughts which form a clear and definite whole.

30. Kinds of Sentences.—There are different kinds of sentences. A sentence may be *simple,* that is consist of one independent clause, or *complex,* that is consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses: or *compound,* that is be made up of more than one independ-

ent clause; or *compound-complex*, that is be made up of more than one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

We stopped. (Simple.)
We stopped, not knowing where we were. (Complex.)
We stopped and listened, but there was no further sound. (Compound.)
We stopped, not knowing where we were, but when the sound ceased we again went forward. (Compound-complex.)

An independent clause, as its name implies, is one that can stand alone. A dependent clause is one that cannot stand alone, but requires grammatical assistance from an independent clause.

We stopped, because we did not know where we were. We dared not move in either direction.

The dependent clause is *because we did not know where we were.* It may either be added, as here, to the independent clause *we stopped*, or prefixed to the independent clause *we dared not move in either direction.* But such a dependent clause cannot stand by itself; as a sentence it is incomplete. Incomplete sentences are usually, as in the example given, the result of bad punctuation. Some writers, as Ruskin and Kipling, now and then deliberately so punctuate, but an unpractised writer cannot afford to do so.

31. The Essentials of a Good Sentence.—Behind clearness and definiteness in the sentence lie two things—(1) *correct grammar*, (2) *sound organization.* Any given sentence may fail in one or both. But they may be analyzed separately.

32. Grammar a Matter of Usage.—In English, as in other languages, usage has prescribed certain forms for

showing the relation of one word in the sentence to the others. These prescribed forms, which make up grammar, the writer must necessarily *know*. The best way to learn them is as a child, by unconscious absorption from reading and the talk of educated people. There are plenty of six-year-olds who use *shall* and *will* properly, who can steer a straight course through their pronouns, and who know correctly the forms of such verbs as they know at all. They cannot write; but when they come to learn to write, they will have no difficulty with sentence-structure. The other and the only other way to learn these various forms is by practice in whatever one writes and speaks—everywhere, not only in English courses. An hour's study of a text-book on composition will be worthless if followed by a week of careless speech in mathematics and history, or of careless writing in letters or examinations. One must either know instinctively these rules of English grammar and turns of idiom from years of constant hearing; or, if he has not been fortunate in this respect, he must grind them into his experience by constant practice.

33. **Solecisms.**—Violations of grammar are called *Solecisms*. The principal violations may be considered for convenience under five heads.

(1) Arrangement. (2) Reference. (3) Co-ordination and Subordination. (4) Ellipsis. (5) Verb-forms.

34. **Arrangement.**—English is largely an uninflected language; that is to say, its words do not change in form to indicate grammatical relations. In Latin, one may write, *Nero interfecit Agrippinam*, or *Nero Agrippinam interfecit*, or *Agrippinam interfecit Nero;* the meaning will be in every case, Nero killed Agrippina. But in English *Nero killed Agrippina* means one thing, *Agrippina killed Nero* means quite another, and *Nero Agrippina killed* is vague and awkward. To a great extent, then, in English,

the meaning results not from the form of the words but from their relative positions. This fact leads sometimes to agreeable absurdities.

Sidney was a tall man, with amber-colored hair, erect and strong.

Donahue smothered the flames that enveloped his friend in bedquilts.

But the humor disappears very quickly as one tries to get the meaning from such a sentence as the following:

I saw him from the window of a car yesterday going down Cottage Grove Avenue.

Going down Cottage Grove Avenue yesterday, I saw him from the window of a car? From the window of a car yesterday, I saw him going down Cottage Grove Avenue? Yesterday, I saw him from the window of a car going down Cottage Grove Avenue? Here are three possible meanings.

Moss grows on the roof also

Does this mean that moss grew on the roof as well as on the walls, or that moss as well as something else grew on the roof?

I only saw him.

Does this mean I saw nobody else, or nobody saw him but me?

The fundamental rule of arrangement is this: *Keep modifiers close to the words they modify.*

There will be an address at three o'clock on the making of the King James Version of the Bible by W. J. Bryan, lasting half an hour.

Here two modifiers of *address*, namely, *by W. J. Bryan*, and *lasting half an hour*, are separated from the word they modify. Make the sentence read:

At three o'clock, there will be an address lasting half an hour by W. J. Bryan, etc.

Better still would be:

At three o'clock W. J. Bryan will speak for half an hour on, etc.

Thus all confusion is avoided.

One of the largest caves in Indiana, which has only been discovered recently, is in Posey County.

Simple transposition of modifying phrases and clauses will not do here. True, we might say,

In Indiana, one of the largest caves, which has only been discovered recently, is in Posey County.

But this is awkward. Better:

One of the largest caves in Indiana has only recently been discovered in Posey County.

Note the change in the position of the word *only*. The theory is that *only* and similar limiting adverbs, such as *certainly, also, even*, govern the word or phrase which immediately follows them.

He saw *only four of us*. **He hated *even his brother*. Send goods** as ordered *also to me* till further notice.

This rule is not universally applied, and so loses much of its effectiveness. You must be careful, therefore, in

using such words to place them so that their relation cannot possibly be ambiguous. If despite your best efforts at transposition the possibility of ambiguity remains, recast the sentence altogether.

Correlative conjunctions, *either . . . or, neither . . . nor, whether . . . or,* demand special care in arrangement. "*Either he or I must go*" is correct; so is "*He must either go or give good reason for not going.*" On the other hand, "*He must either go or I must*" is awkward, and "*He must either go if we ask him or his brother*" is both awkward and obscure. If the first of such a pair of conjunctions is followed by a noun or pronoun, let the second also be followed by a noun or pronoun; if the first is followed by a verb, let the second be followed by a verb. This is the safest rule.

35. Reference.—Closely allied to arrangement is *reference.* Many words—pronouns, adverbs, adjectives—are used to *refer* the reader to some idea already stated or about to be stated.

Yesterday I saw the president. *He* seems very good-natured.
Friends, comforts, peace of mind, all *such* things he resigned.
I suggested a walking-tour in the Adirondacks, and *this* suggestion was finally adopted.

The reference is theoretically to an idea. Grammatical usage, however, based on common-sense, demands that the reference *shall always be to a particular word.*

Three errors are common, (1) *incorrect reference,* (2) *ambiguous reference,* (3) *obscure reference.*

1. *Incorrect reference* is failure to make the reference-word agree in number with the word to which it refers. It occurs most often (*a*) following certain distributive pronouns; *anybody, everybody, nobody, everyone,* (*b*) following group-words, such as *crowd, flock, family, hundred, dozen,* etc., (*c*) following phrases in which two or more nouns,

singular or plural, have been used, and the writer has carelessly lost track of what he is referring to.

(*a*) The distributives mentioned are all singular.

Everybody said he (not *they*) had had a good time.
Nobody dared to say that he (not *they*) would undertake it.

(*b*) Group-words may be considered singular or plural as the writer chooses, but when he has made his choice he must stick to it throughout the passage.

The crowd was so dense we could hardly get through *it*. It almost trampled us to bits.
The crowd were threatening us, but we paid no attention to *them*.
He offered me two dollars and naturally I took *it*.
Here are a hundred dollars; spend *them* wisely.
The family had been kind to me; why should I not be grateful to *them*?
When I saw the family, I was annoyed by *it*.

These are all correct references; but the following are incorrect:

The crowd was so dense we could hardly get through it. *They* almost trampled us to bits.
Here are a hundred dollars; *it* is all I have. Spend *them* wisely.
The family *was* kind to me, why should I not be grateful to *them*?

(*c*) In such phrases as the following the careless writer has lost track of what he is referring to.

The language of flowers is well known, and in every cheap publication there are references to *them*.
A passage such as this among his earlier writings, *which are* not unusual, show that even by 1800 he had begun to condemn slavery.

2. A reference is *ambiguous* when more than one word may possibly be the word referred to.

He told his brother that his life was in danger. (Whose life?)
Elsie went straight to Sarah and taking the pin fastened it in the front of her dress. (Whose dress?)
The fight over the proposed Bowler gas ordinance will come to a crisis tonight at the council meeting. It is conceded that it will pass. (Does *it* refer to fight, ordinance, crisis, or meeting?)

3. *Obscurity of reference* occurs when the idea referred to has not been expressed in one particular word.

I suggested a walking tour in the Adirondacks, and *this* was finally adopted. (What was adopted?)
The fishermen's huts were somewhat scattered, yet near enough so that *they* could be assembled at the sound of a drum.
Gambling is permitted there, and *the same* is true of many other places.
Journalism is an easy profession for a boy to get into, and some *of them* make money in it.
If a rabbit's foot is to be worth anything, *it* must be caught in a graveyard in the dark of the moon.

The remedy for all faults of reference is the same: *Refer always to some one particular word, and let that word be perfectly clear to the reader.*

Exercise.

What is wrong in the following sentences?

1. I give these few examples of cases I know about and I hear the same is true in other rooms.
2. Every person in the cast was dressing for their parts.
3. On the water's edge are seats protected by a roof where one may sit and watch the bathers.
4. At each pile of brush one of us would lay down our gun and shake the leaves while the others stood ready to shoot.

5. I know of a firm dealing with European countries in which no one understands foreign languages; so that they are obliged to send them out to a woman who translates them for twenty-five cents a letter.

6. In college one learns how to act among strangers, which will help him to get acquainted in the business world.

7. The work of the wind is a very important subject since it greatly affects the surface of the earth and consequently mankind.

8. It was one of those little states which composed the empire controlled by insignificant princes.

9. I have never become a good reader and I think this is due to lack of practise when a child.

10. It is far better to inflict bodily punishment than to deprive a child of his play, which is very bad for his health.

11. As every school is interested in athletics, they would give Mr. Parker a cordial welcome if he came to aid them.

12. He pulled out an old red bandanna, violently blew his somewhat ample Roman nose, and then stuffed it into his pocket.

13. There are numerous business men who advertise in the paper which gives it its financial support.

14. He began to look on everyone who approached him with the belief that he was going to do something to him.

15. They wore a mantle with long sleeves over their tunic, a scapular around their neck which reached to their knees in front, and a cord about their waist.

36. Co-ordination and Subordination.—There are in English certain conjunctions, *and, but, or, nor, for,* which are called co-ordinating because they are used to connect parts of the sentence *of equal grammatical value and similar form.* A noun for example is equal in grammatical value with another noun, a phrase with a phrase, a participial clause with a participial clause, a relative clause with a relative clause, an independent clause with an independent clause. These co-ordinate conjunctions cannot properly be used to connect parts of the sentence of unequal grammatical value.

It is proposed to remove the duty on Canadian flour, but the Canadians may retain the duty on flour coming from the United States.

Here *but* is made to connect the dependent clause: "to remove the duty" with the independent clause, "The Canadians may retain."

He sent her a message full of tenderness, *and which* she never forgot.

This is the so-called "*and which* construction." *And* is made to connect an adjective-phrase, "full of tenderness" with a relative clause "which she never forgot." Examples of such use by good writers can be cited, but it has not become idiomatic.

He was not a man accustomed to give way to his temper, or acting violently.

Here the infinitive clause "to give way to his temper" is connected by "or" with the participial clause "acting violently."

Twenty thousand people saw three riders hurled from their machines, but escaping serious injuries, in the motorcycle races at Riverview last night.

Here *and* is made to connect *hurled* and *escaping*—words of equal grammatical value but dissimilar in form.

When confusion or awkwardness results from co-ordinate construction, the practical writer tries to subordinate one construction. He changes an independent clause to a dependent, or a dependent clause to a phrase, or a phrase to a word. By way of illustration let us take the sentence, *The valley was flooded, and we had hard work to get through.* Subordinating one independent clause, we

may write, *The valley was so flooded that we had hard work to get through.* Further subordinating a dependent clause, we may write, *The valley was so flooded that we got through only with great difficulty.* Still further subordinating, we may write, *We got through the flooded valley only with great difficulty.* Of course the fact that these subordinations often involve a slight difference of meaning must be taken into account. They all tend to reduce the number of words and particularly of finite verbs used. Hence they are often called *the reduction of predication.* Other examples follow:

1. We proceeded some distance and finally came to an open glade on the skirts of the forest.
2. After proceeding some distance, we finally came to an open glade on the skirts of the forest.

1. Of course many plans suggest themselves and the only difficulty is to decide which one is best and can be scientifically carried out.
2. Of course many plans present themselves, and the difficulty is to decide on the best and most practicable.
3. The real difficulty is to decide on the best and most practicable of the many plans that suggest themselves.

1. We went in the machine as far up as Watertown, and there we had to leave it and take a train which carried us to Brownsville, and from Brownsville we could only go on horseback.
2. We went in the machine as far up as Watertown. There we had to leave it and take a train for Brownsville. From Brownsville we could only go on horseback.
3. We went by the machine as far up as Watertown. Leaving the car there, we went to Brownsville by train and thence on horseback.
4. We went in the machine as far up as Watertown, thence by train to Brownsville, and from there on horseback.

Colloquial speech employs as co-ordinating conjunctions a number of words which are really subordinate, or even in

their effect adverbial only. These words are, *accordingly, besides, consequently, hence, however, moreover, nevertheless, therefore,* and in particular *so.* The effect of their careless use may be seen in the following sentences:

The morning was cold, hence we all took sweaters.
She paid no attention to his remarks, therefore he relapsed into silence.
She ran as fast as she could, however, she missed it by two minutes.
I was tired, so I sat down.
The house had been shut up for months, so the musty odor was very strong.
He had never told, so how could we know?

To correct the awkwardness of such sentences we must either subordinate one clause:

The morning being cold, we all took sweaters.
As the morning was cold we all took sweaters.
He relapsed into silence because she paid no attention to his remarks.
Though she ran as fast as she could she missed it by two minutes.
As I was tired, I sat down.

Or else we must establish some co-ordinate relationship between the parts of the sentence the conjunctions are supposed to connect. We may add a co-ordinate conjunction:

I was tired, and so I sat down.
The hour was late, but nevertheless he stayed on.

Or we may use a semi-colon:

I was tired; so I sat down.
The hour was late; nevertheless he stayed on.

Or we may put each statement in a separate sentence:

I was tired. So I sat down.
The hour was late. Nevertheless he stayed on.

NOTE. *So*, the worst and most constant betrayer of the young writer's confidence, should not be confused with *so that*, a perfectly respectable subordinating conjunction.

EXERCISE.

1. We were cold and hungry from the long exposure, besides neither of us knew the way, accordingly we turned back and retraced our steps painfully as best we might.
2. She left the room in a rage, her eyes blazing, and slamming the door after her.
3. I could not go to sleep, so decided I would spend the time studying.
4. The books had been ordered weeks before the opening of the school, however did not arrive in time.
5. He wrote very incorrectly, but trying his best to make her understand his real feeling on the subject.
6. She discovered that she had made a mistake in adding the left-hand column, hence all the confusion.
7. He went to the house to see if anyone there had heard the news, and thinking perhaps that the boy had left a note on the dresser.
8. The ice-cream always turned out badly, either frozen too hard, or melting into a liquid.
9. He had explained in person that he would be unable to come, therefore he thought a letter unnecessary.
10. In a flash she understood the truth of the whole situation and saw with relentless vision its inevitable consequences for herself, nevertheless she continued looking at him as though he had not spoken.
11. Neither the sun nor the north star was visible, so we had not the slightest idea of direction.
12. He fell off the bicycle and sprained his ankle, but saving the basket of eggs.
13. He had left the house in an ugly mood, moreover the time elapsing in the journey had permitted his smouldering sense of injustice to eat its way to the surface.
14. However badly he expressed himself, he always had some-

thing to say, besides he had never had the training and advantages of the others.

15. The cottage was situated in the woods on the bluff, and having a most beautiful view over Lake Michigan.

37. Ellipsis.—Ellipsis is the omission of words which are to be understood from the context. Deliberate ellipsis is common and often desirable.

Father was arrayed against son, brother against brother.

Here the words *was arrayed* are omitted from the second clause, because they can be understood from the context.

Chosen almost unanimously, he took his seat.

The words *having been* are omitted. But these omissions, often wise, sometimes lead to obscurity.

Dayton is nearer Pittsburgh than Chicago.

Than *to* Chicago? Than Chicago *is*? Nobody but the writer can tell.

She likes me less than you.

Than you *do*? Than *she does* you? Or these omissions may lead less to obscurity than to awkwardness.

I am so much obliged.
I am so unhappy.

How much is so much? So much *that I cannot express* it? How unhappy is so unhappy? So unhappy *that I wish I had never been born*? *So*, in this and similar constructions, theoretically requires completion by some dependent clause. The absence of such a clause may be atoned for by substituting an exclamation-point. But the

use of the "feminine so," as it has been called, is best avoided altogether.

Being a friendly sort of man, she got on easily with him.

This type of error is very common. It is a misunderstanding of the Latin "absolute construction"—*He being a friendly sort of man,* she got on easily with him. (See page 65.) This is sufficiently awkward in itself, to English taste; but when the subject of the participle is omitted the result is most unfortunate. Other participial clauses also lend themselves to awkward elisions.

Going home, the wind blew very strongly.
Leaving the square, the next object of interest is the monument.
Greek is excellent for discipline, and when honestly pursued you can expect to profit by it.

A good rule is this: *Never omit words unless exactly those words can be supplied from the context.*

In girlhood she was sympathetic, in womanhood beautiful, in old age tender.

Here the ellipses are justifiable because the words omitted (*she was*) can be supplied from the context.

I was old, they young; and I envied them.

Here the ellipsis is *not* justifiable, because the word *were,* which is needed before young, cannot be supplied from the context.

One sort of ellipsis needs special mention—the omission of the article (*a* or *the*).

He read from the Old and New Testament.
A tall and fat man were standing side by side.

In both cases, the omission of the article is confusing. The rule is, *the article must distinguish each person or thing mentioned.*

EXERCISE.

Comment on the desirability or undesirability of the ellipses in the following sentences:

1. Around her mouth are the deep lines of care, and engraved on her forehead furrows.
2. The squirrel makes its home in trees, usually in parts unfrequented by man.
3. As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.
4. The pen is mightier than the sword.
5. I was more interested in the work than anyone about me.
6. Tracing with the pointer, the river branches in three places and runs in southwesterly direction to the Gulf.
7. It is too bad.
8. Looking around, the horse took advantage of the slackened rein to throw him suddenly from the saddle.
9. He carved the meat instead of his father.
10. As a man he was little, as a soldier and a general great.

38. Verb-forms.—Agreement of verbs with their subjects needs no general discussion here. But three things in particular may be noted.

1. Do not allow words intervening between subject and verb to confuse you. Compare the sentence above:

Agreement of verbs with their subjects *needs*, etc.

2. Qualifying phrases do not affect the number of the subject. The following are correct:

A young fellow with a child clinging to each hand *was passing* at the moment.

The way of a maid with a man, like the way of a bird in the air and of a serpent upon the rocks, *passes* understanding.

3. A compound subject takes the plural verb ordinarily, but may take the singular if the parts of the subject make a definite unit. The verbs in the following sentences are correct:

Bread and milk *is* her diet; and health, strength and beauty *are* the result of it.

EXERCISE.

Correct such of the following sentences as require correction:

1. The very fact that there are older people alter many of the conditions.
2. Other important things I wish to acquire before I leave college is a fairly good knowledge of mathematics, and an interest in and liking for books.
3. The number of volumes in a library do not necessarily make a good library.
4. The bottom of these lead chambers in which the acid was first prepared were covered with water.
5. A very few academies require seventeen or eighteen hours of work, but none, with the exception of this school, require as many as twenty-one.
6. The family was like my own in the way they made me one of them.
7. The girl as well as her brother is completely independent of home support.
8. It was one of those books which are invariably seen lying on parlor tables, which are utilized to give the atmosphere of culture, and are never read.

39. Tenses.—*Future—Shall and Will.* Discussions of the use of *shall* and *will* are numerous as the sands of the seashore, and hardly as valuable. The distinction between

the two is slowly breaking down, but is by no means broken down as yet. Indeed by many people they are regarded as passwords of the educated, the shibboleth of culture.

A good rule is: *In both direct and indirect speech, use* SHALL *and* SHOULD *in the* FIRST *person,* WILL *and* WOULD *in the others. Vary from this rule* ONLY *to express determination or command.*

I shall go, I should go; he would go, they will go, you will go. These are the ordinary forms, the forms expressing simple futurity, the forms which nine times out of ten we wish to use. Fix them in your mind, and use them invariably unless you have a good reason (the desire to express determination or command) not to use them. If you once establish these forms as standard for ordinary usage, the difficulty in most cases is met.

In questions, use the form proper to the answer.

You ask a friend, "Will you go the theatre with me?" because you expect his answer, involving determination on his part, to be "I will" or "I will not." You say to your instructor "Shall we have a test tomorrow?" because his answer, if it were given in a direct form, would involve determination on his part. It would be "You shall," or "You shall not." On the other hand, you ask, "Will it be a hard one?" because his proper answer is "It will," or "It will not."

EXERCISE.

Insert the proper words in the blank spaces in the following sentences:

1. If I _____ see a student cheat in an examination, _____ I be justified in reporting the fact?
2. _____ you make the call today or tomorrow?
3. He asked the policeman on the corner if he _____ reach the place by taking a Grand Crossing car.

4. I give you my word of honor that I ——— not repeat what you say.

5. "On the contrary," he exclaimed, "she ——— know everything that I can tell."

6. ——— you be willing to accept the money if I considered it simply as a loan?

7. I ——— not speak so loud if I were you.

8. The rule is written not only in all noble histories, but in every man's heart, if he ——— take care to read.

9. We had thought that we ——— go east this summer, if you ——— be willing to run the house for us.

10. I have decided that I ——— go in spite of what you say.

11. Make me king's pantler; make me abbot of St. Denis; make me bailly of the Patatrac; and then I ——— be changed indeed.

12. You ——— excuse my abruptness, but I do not believe that I have met you before.

13. Very well; you ——— do as you wish, and we ——— do as we think best.

14. I ——— like it if they ——— consider the matter closed once and for all.

15. If you ——— listen to what I say, you ——— learn something important that I ——— not trouble myself to repeat again.

Present.—The present, in English, is used in three ways: The *actual* present—the moment of speaking. I *love* you. You *hate* me. I *wish* I could. He *knows* it. But observe that except in a few instances like these just mentioned, the actual present is formed only by prefixing to the participle *am, is,* or *are.* I *am* running. He *is breathing* hard. They *are doing* well.

What is called by grammarians the present tense of the verb usually signifies not the present of the moment of speech, but a *continuous or general* present. *I stand on my record. He talks too much. You recite well. Men pass away, but still their works remain.* Compare these with actual present—I *am standing* on my record; he *is talking* too much; you *are reciting* well, etc.

What is called the *historical* present is also used. This, however, is merely a trick of style, intended to give vividness to narration. It consists in speaking of past events as if they were taking place at the moment.

Lincoln at Gettysburg! There he stands, this gaunt, awkward man; his eyes, sad and tender, look not upon the thousands about him, but into the past and the future; his voice is too low to be heard by more than the nearest of his audience, but the words he is speaking shall ring forever in the heart of the nation.

The device has its value: Carlyle, for example, uses it amazingly well; but the ordinary writer will find that it soon grows stale. It is exclamatory in its effect, and to be exclamatory is to be tiresome.

The Past.—In most cases the simple past tense is used to fix a definite moment. *He fired, the girl laughed, the long day ended.* With some few verbs, however, the simple past is used not only to fix such a definite moment, but also in reference to the past in general (*I loved, I hated, the plant grew steadily, he thought her beautiful, he believed in God, etc.*). The imperfect, perfect and pluperfect are always used in reference either to the past in general (*the girl was always laughing*), or to events related to some previously fixed moment (It is night; the long day *has ended*).

To use past tenses correctly, therefore, you must know whether you are dealing with *the past in general*, or with *a fixed moment in the past.* To illustrate: *She has laughed at me* fixes no particular occasion, but implies the past generally. *She was laughing at me* relates her action to some moment which has been otherwise fixed. *She laughed at me* fixes a particular occasion.

Such a definite moment in the past once having been fixed, the general tenses take care of whatever events group

themselves about that moment—before, during, and after that moment. For instance:

He said that he had been investigating, and he thought that the time had come for action.

He said fixes some particular moment. *He had been investigating* is relative to that moment—*before* that moment. *He thought* is again simple past and fixes a particular moment. *The time had come* is relative—had come *at that moment.*

The proper use of the tenses in English is to some extent a matter of idiom. But careful thinking will generally bring the writer safely through. Take for instance a common mistake; the use of a past infinitive with a past verb:

I knew better than to have tried it.

Nobody would say "I know better than to have tried it." But *know* fixes a definite moment (the present), just as *knew* fixes a definite moment (in the past). At this definite moment our information told us *not to try*; it did not tell us *not to have tried.* Speaking of ourselves at that moment, therefore, we must say "I knew enough *not to try* it."

It is in such cases as this that difficulties occur, where one tense must be used not by itself but in relation to another.

He says that he is enjoying himself. The continuous present follows the simple present. *He said that he was enjoying himself.* The imperfect follows the past. *He has said that he is enjoying himself.* What does this mean, and how does it differ from "he has said that he was enjoying himself?" No rule can be laid down; you must know what each tense signifies, and think out its relation, in each particular case, to any other tense you have used.

Exercise.

Discuss the *exact* meaning of the following sentences. The verbs are correctly used.

1. Composition is valuable training.
2. He said that composition is valuable training.
3. He said that composition was valuable training.
4. To be a poet is to be unhappy.
5. He said that to be a poet is to be unhappy.
6. He said that to be a poet is to have been unhappy.
7. He denied that he had been trying any such scheme.
8. He denied that he was trying any such scheme.
9. If I had known the way, I should have gone.
10. If I knew the way, I should go.
11. I knew that I was mistaken.
12. I know now that I am mistaken; I supposed then that I was mistaken; but, God help me, I cannot and could not do otherwise.
13. Being dead he yet speaks.
14. Being dead he yet spake.
15. Having been informed of the fellow's habits, we paid no attention to him.
16. Having been informed of the fellow's habits, we pay no attention to him.
17. Having been informed of the fellow's habits, we are paying no attention to him.

Comment on the various tense-forms in the following sentences. Are any incorrectly used?

1. He would have wished { to see / to have seen } you before he died.
2. The girl is aware that she { is doing / was doing / has been doing } wrong.
3. Having followed his directions explicitly, I still { fail / failed / have failed } to gain the correct results.

4. I have the key; so you need not { try / have tried } to open the door.

5. He had been sentenced twice already before he { has been / was } caught for the third time.

6. When he and I dwelt there together, the rooms { had been / were } a temple of misogyny.

7. I am coming to realize that { to have attempted / to attempt } friendship would have been impossible.

8. Death is a dignity to which all of us { shall have attained. / have attained. / may attain.

9. The place acquired a sudden interest from the fact that it { was / was being } occupied by the man to whom she { had been / was } previously introduced.

10. They have said that they { were having / are having / had, have } a delightful time cruising on the Mediterranean.

11. He had thought { to catch / to have caught } the train in plenty of time by leaving the house at eleven o'clock.

12. In spite of the fact that you are laughing now, you will yet { have had / have } cause to repent it.

13. She had learned, in her long vigils, that there { are / were / have been } certain things not good to think upon, certain midnight images that must at any cost be exorcized.

14. Anxious as he was to avoid personal notice, he { took / takes } a pleasure so exquisite in the printed mention of his name that it seemed a compensation for his shrinking from publicity.

15. It is good { to have seen / to see } Naples.

40. The Participle and the Infinitive.—Participial constructions in English are frequent and of great service. The student should remember:

1. That the present participle, in English as in Latin, always takes the same subject as the main verb, and refers to the same time as the main verb.

Going to a restaurant, supper was served. This is obviously wrong, because the participle must be construed with *supper*, the subject of the main verb; and such a construction makes nonsense.

Going to a restaurant, we had supper. This too is wrong, because the time referred to by the participle differs from the time referred to by the main verb; unless, indeed, the writer means that they ate on their way to the restaurant.

Correct uses of the present participle are:

Looking up, we could see the blue sky.

Going home we almost lost our way.

Turning, he stared hard at me.

She looked away blushing.

2. That both the participle and the infinitive have often the force of a noun, and in such a case each bears exactly the same relation as a noun to the other parts of the sentence. Correct uses:

Going to the theatre was a favorite diversion of mine.

Traveling hither and thither wasted my time.

His firing the shot was accidental.

John's *being willing* was a surprise to me.

To be or not to be is the question.

To fly was almost impossible, and he thought *it* dishonorable into the bargain.

41. The Organization of the Sentence.—The second essential of a good sentence is *sound organization.* To know and observe the usages of grammar is essential, but if you would write effectively, or even clearly, is not enough.

All except the very simplest sentence-forms demand careful planning. At first this organization must be largely accomplished by *revision*; gradually it becomes almost instinctive.

One kind of sentence, simple, complex, or compound, is theoretically as good as another. The kind you should employ in any given case depends on two things: the idea you have to express, and the necessity of avoiding monotony. Your reader will demand that every sentence be clear, and that in every sentence you make it easy for him to understand what things you consider most important. In other words, *clearness and proper emphasis* are the matters to be sought in sentence-organization.

42. Clearness in the Sentence.—Consider the following sentence. It is grammatically correct, and properly punctuated, but it is far from clear.

It is my purpose to discuss Hawthorne's use of the supernatural in his stories, of which almost all deal with supernatural forces.

Here are two ideas (1) Hawthorne's constant use of the supernatural element, (2) the writer's purpose to discuss this use. Each of these ideas may be put in a separate sentence, as follows:

Of Hawthorne's stories almost all deal with the supernatural forces. This constant use of the supernatural I purpose to discuss.

Or the one idea may be made wholly subordinate to the other, and the two may be properly included in one sentence, as follows:

It is my purpose to discuss the almost constant use of the supernatural in the stories of Hawthorne.

Take another instance.

Hawthorne does not take pleasure in portraying sin and merely brings it in to teach the great moral lessons he has in mind.

The ideas here belong together; but the sentence fails to bring out properly this logical relation. The writer means to say

Hawthorne does not take pleasure in portraying sin, *but* merely brings it in to teach the great moral lessons he has in mind.

Often in the sentence as in the paragraph and the whole composition, as a result of careless thinking material gets in which has no business there. Things associated in the writer's mind come to the surface together, and needing one for his purpose he foolishly uses both.

I enjoyed myself very much at San Diego, which has a delightful climate at that time of the year, although in the summer of course it is very hot.

Here the idea of the final clause clung in the writer's mind to the other idea of San Diego's climate, and he put it into his sentence, with the result of obscuring his real point.

Or it may happen that the writer splits in two an idea that should be expressed in one sentence.

There are seven million people who buy from us two hundred and twenty-five million dollars' worth of goods every year. In return they sell us a hundred million dollars' worth.

This is bad arrangement, because the ideas of buying and selling belong naturally together, form one idea in fact. They should therefore be combined in one sentence. The number of the people may or may not find a place in the sentence, just as the writer chooses. He may write either:

Here are seven million people. They buy from us $225,000,000 worth of goods every year, and in return sell us $100,000,000 worth.

Or:

Here are seven million people who buy from us $225,000,000 worth of goods every year, and in turn sell us $100,000,000 worth.

It is obvious that (1) a sentence usually contains more than one idea; (2) clearness demands that the relation of the different ideas to one another be made plain. How can this demand of clearness be fulfilled?

43. How to Gain Clearness.—The fundamental necessity is that the writer should know just what, in each sentence, he is driving at. If he is confused, his readers of course will be. But certain points which should be of assistance may be noted.

1. Do not, except for good reason, shift the subject of a sentence. Note the following passage:

I took botany in my freshman year in high school, and it has been my favorite study ever since. It takes one outdoors, and you get to know the flowers. It is a practical study, for you find use for it every day. I do not know much botany even now, but a walk nevertheless is a great pleasure. For I always find new things, and it was the study of botany which taught me how to do this.

In every sentence the writer shifts the subject. The result is intolerably clumsy. Rewritten:

I began botany in my freshman year in high school and have liked it ever since. It takes one outdoors, and teaches one to know the flowers. It is a practical study, showing its usefulness every day. I do not know much botany even now, but I am always finding out new things and getting pleasure from my walks, and I owe all this to my study of botany.

Observe that in each of the first three sentences the subjects have been reduced from two to one. The fourth and fifth sentences have been combined into one, which is compound, but which retains the same subject throughout.

The same rule holds good in clauses—keep the same subject, if possible, throughout.

(a) The mail is then divided into four classes, which are handled by different clerks and the stamps placed upon them.

(b) The mail is then divided into four classes, *which are handled and stamped* by different clerks.

2. In general, phrase like ideas alike. This, which is often called "parallel construction," is a matter of much importance to clearness.

(a) What follows is scarcely applicable to recent immigrants, and of course applies even less to the Southern negroes.

(b) What follows is scarcely applicable to recent immigrants, and of course even less applicable to the Southern negroes.

(a) When I went back home, I was surprised to see how small the place was, and that it seemed to have grown ugly.

(b) When I went back home, I was surprised to see how small the place was, and how ugly it seemed to have grown.

3. Use as few verbs as possible, and make those verbs, if possible, active. In other words, follow the suggestion on page 52 to "reduce predication."

(a) We made our way through woods which were very thick.

(b) We made our way through very thick woods.

(a) We waited for the mystery to be solved.

(b) We waited for the solution of the mystery.

(a) I was carried on by the current, which was very swift.

(b) The swift current carried me on.

(a) I went down town and saw the procession, which the Knights of Commerce had organized elaborately and which was very long.

(b) I went down town and saw the very long and elaborate procession which the Knights of Commerce had oraganized.

Exercise.

Determine what are the main ideas of the following sentences, and recast the sentences to make these ideas in each case clear and definite. *Make any change of form or wording you please.*

1. There is mystery and evil in this tale and Ethan Brand is the center of it all.
2. His heart had become stone because of the exclusion of good from it and the stone is the symbol of one who turns his back on God.
3. The last named story seems to prove the presence of God in the universe and it is pleasant to feel that the author has at last been able to come to such a conclusion.
4. At Strassburg, Goethe's associates were chiefly students of medicine, to which science he devoted a great deal of his time, although he spent much of each day also in the ordinary social diversions of the period.
5. Everybody was very good to us and we stayed a day longer than we had intended.
6. I do not recall many interesting experiences, except being chased by a bull once, and perhaps I might write about that.
7. At six o'clock the car came and took us round the boulevards for an hour, after which we had supper.
8. The window was open and through it he could see the family at supper, which was the principal meal of the day in Wheaton as it is in most small western towns.
9. It was so hot that we could not do any work and reading was forbidden me and as swimming was about all I could do I spent three hours a day in the water.
10. St. Paul and Minneapolis have outgrown the envy of each other which in their younger days they used to feel, as children often do about the most trivial matters, even for instance who shall have "first help" at breakfast.
11. The land in the older states became devoted to corn and cattle. Hogs were also extensively raised, but wheat and other cereals were left to newer lands.
12. I do not advocate this treaty in view of its benefit to the United States alone. I am sure it will be beneficial to Canada

also, and if I did not think so my enthusiasm for the treaty would be much abated.

13. This matter which has given cause for much writing is the subject of ventilation in the recitation rooms.

14. As soon as stabbed I fell in my chair and the way I fell back startled some in the room.

15. The tired farmer's wife, wearied with other people's shopping, is too tired to do any herself, and folding up her small table, takes her place in the covered wagon, and seated beside her husband begins her long ride home.

16. In walked three rough-looking young men, and each wore a slouch hat.

17. This is brought about by sand and dust being blown against the surface of a rock having the effect of sand blast, and often wearing away very hard rock.

18. However, he managed to stir up quite a little enthusiasm, and reformed matters quite a little, but this movement unfortunately did not last very long, for as soon as he disappeared, old habits were resumed.

19. Death, which had allowed her but a few short hours of wedded bliss, was caused by heart-disease.

20. How can many students fail to be aroused to go and cheer for ——— after reading frequently articles in the daily paper which appeal to their loyalty?

21. There are several people who are having experience in this line of work now which no doubt will aid materially in their life's work, for the capable editors that the "Daily" has had and has made have a successful future before them undoubtedly.

22. It was the first time I had lived a rural life for any length of time, and it struck me as pleasant at first, but after one week I began to long for the city again.

23. One hot day my aunt sent my cousin, a lad of fourteen, to her sister's on an errand, who lived in the valley.

24. The horse slowed up with short jerky steps and as a result I, pulling my brother with me, who held on to my skirt, fell into the tall grass and sand burrs below, along the roadside.

25. When we were well started on our trip, our train made a stop at a certain station, where my uncle asked me to be quiet and wait, and he would buy me some bananas right there in the depot, and would be back in a minute.

26. For weeks the farmer often prays for rain, only too frequently without response, for he must see his whole wheat and

corn, on which he has spent so much work in the spring and early summer, ruined, while he is helpless to prevent it, knowing how great a loss it means to him financially.

27. After a layer about eight inches deep of cinders is put down, a layer of sand and crushed stone mixed, about three or four inches in thickness, is laid out, according to the law requirements.

Rewrite the following sentences, avoiding unnecessary shifts of construction.

1. There are certain traits of character which we acquire by experience, by living as we do among the people and surroundings that we are.

2. Assistance is given in four ways, namely: by remission of tuition, by the Students' Fund Society, by the granting of a service scholarship, and by assisting students in getting outside employment.

3. There are pumpkin and apple pies with thin rich crust and thick rich pumpkin, or very full of apples, according to the kind of pie.

4. Her newly-made husband was devotion itself; she wore the gayest dress in the room; the festivity was really in her honor; she was the observed of observers; her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were bright.

5. I have taken all the trips with the class and have found them beneficial in very few ways, and, also, they have prevented my doing things equally important.

6. I went to the door and saw a friend waiting for me in his machine, and upon going out to see him, he begged me to ride down town with him on an errand.

7. The dredge company had agreed to dredge a channel seventy-five feet wide and twenty-three feet deep around the four docks for twenty dollars per hour, and that the dredge should work twelve hours a day.

8. The point of conflict was not that I did not realize a need of further preparation but how best to secure it.

9. Sadie was taken in as a boarder and Fleeceman taught her the trade of a finisher.

10. The lesson assigned must be prepared by everyone, or he must be excused from reciting before class.

11. The abbot was supposed to rule and heal men; he must guide and support his followers; accustom himself to all dispositions; be a servant in respect to his own commands; and, above all, all men must be treated equally.

12. He went to see what he could do for the man and carrying a few common remedies with him.

13. The concentrated acid is placed in platinum or glass vessels and heated, and drives off the remaining portion of water.

14. Every year these libraries are added to by appropriations and also, from time to time, gifts are made which help the good cause along.

15. During King Frederick's reign, the territory of Prussia had not been increased to a great extent, nor had she gained the political power due her.

44. Emphasis.—We have seen that a sentence is usually the expression of various ideas in combination. A sentence is *clear* if the relation of these various ideas to one another is plain. A sentence is *emphatic* if the reader recognizes instantly and unmistakably the main idea.

Emphasis in the sentence is the product of three factors—*form, position,* and *proportion.*

(1) *Form.* Broadly speaking, the reader feels that *whatever is put into an independent clause is important.* For example, in the sentence, "I went down town and bought a hat," the emphasis is evenly distributed between the two acts. Change it to "Having gone down town, I bought a hat," and you shift the emphasis to the purchase; change it to "I went down town to buy a hat," and you shift the emphasis to the journey. As a rule, therefore, put what you wish to emphasize into an independent clause.

(2) *Position.* What catches the reader's eye, in every sentence, is the beginning and end—particularly the end. That which you wish to emphasize, therefore, you should place in one of these conspicuous positions. Note the difference in the emphasis of the following:

(a) I hated spiders, snakes, girls, and rice-pudding, but I hated school most of all.

(b) Spiders, snakes, girls, and rice-pudding I hated, but most of all I hated school.

(a) In every sentence what catches the reader's eye is the beginning and the end, inevitably.

(b) What catches the reader's eye in every sentence is inevitably the beginning and the end.

(a) This is the substance of the whole matter, in short.

(b) This is, in short, the substance of the whole matter.

(a) He is weak on his backhand usually.

(b) He is usually weak on his backhand.

(a) So to speak, there are three branches from the main trunk of the river.

(b) There are three branches, so to speak, from the main trunk of the river.

Sometimes the writer desires to throw this emphasis on words repeated for coherence. The rule still holds: place them at the beginning or the end of the sentence.

He was said to be a man of fearful temper. This temper, however, I had never seen. *Or*, I, however, had never seen this temper.

The practice of "burying" in the middle of the sentence such connectives as *however, moreover, consequently, besides,* etc., may be said to be among good writers invariable.

He was, however, no friend of mine.

I had seen her once before with the sunshine in her hair; I knew her, therefore, at once.

In connection with the relation of position to emphasis the so-called "normal order" of the English sentence may be pointed out, and the effect of changing it. This normal order is:

1. The modifiers of the subject and the subject.
2. The verb and the modifiers of the verb.

3. The modifiers of the object and the object.
The following is a typically normal sentence:

The tall poplars softly whispered their old tales.

Now any change in the normal order is likely to attract the reader's attention, for exactly the same reason that a boy would attract attention who wore his waistcoat outside his coat. Such sentences as these demand notice:

To Peace, however, in this vortex of existence, can the Son of Time not pretend.

Certainly a most involved, self-secluded, altogether enigmatic nature, this of Teufelsdröckh.

Hast thou in any way a contention with thy brother, I advise thee, think well what the meaning thereof is.

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Beautiful it was to sit there, as in my skyey tent, musing and meditating.

The trouble with such violent reversals of the normal order, however, is that they not only attract but tire the reader's attention. They are so clamorous they soon become wearisome, and lose their force. Change the normal order, if you please, to secure emphasis, now and then; but do not continually change it.

(3) *Proportion.* Finally, in the sentence as in the whole composition and the paragraph, the amount of space given to the development of an idea tends to determine its emphasis. Even a parenthesis, if it is long, will attract the reader's attention. Give in greatest detail, therefore, what is of greatest importance.

Obviously, these three factors of emphasis may be used in combination, or they may work against one another. Perhaps the most effective is *position*; but skill demands the proper employment of all three.

Exercise.

In the following sentences, comment on the emphasis, and change the form of any which seem to you ineffective.

1. Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting.

2. He cried "Heavens!" throwing up his hands. "Where was my head? Where have I wandered?"

3. In one thing, however, his duty and interest, his generosity and his terrors coincided.

4. Listen, and for organ music thou wilt ever, as of old, hear the Morning Stars sing together.

5. An ancient manor, now rich with cultivation, then barren and unenclosed, lay about a day's journey south of Leeds, on the verge of a wild moorland tract which was known by the name of Hallamshire.

6. Small critics do what they can to promote unbelief and universal spiritual paralysis; but happily they cannot always completely succeed.

7. He was asked if he repented of his treason twice; and he replied twice that, if the thing were to do again, he would do it.

8. We were both convinced that the house, every corner of which breathed an atmosphere of treachery, was alive with hidden spies, as I have said.

9. It seemed a wonder to poor people, looking up under moist eyebrows, where all the snow came from.

10. All, indeed, were agreed as to the propriety of inflicting punishment on some unhappy men who were, at that moment, objects of almost universal hatred.

11. Mechanically he stood still; mechanically wiped the perspiration from his brow.

12. Equipped with an impenetrable disguise, as it were, the commander sipped his brandy and soda in security.

13. A man, be the heavens ever praised, is sufficient for himself; yet were ten men, united in Love, capable of being and doing what ten thousand singly would fail in. Infinite is the help man can yield to man.

14. Of all the enemies of the court he was the most deeply criminal, without doubt.

15. Rome blazoned the fame of barbarian triumphs in her downfall.

16. He was a handsome man, although careless of his appearance.

17. I care not, if it be so or not.

18. He said "Life is short," lightly.

45. The Sentence in Relation to Other Sentences.—A sentence, as has been said, rarely stands alone; it is almost always a part of a group,—the paragraph or the whole composition. Its group relations, therefore, are important. Grammar is a matter of the individual sentence, but coherence of thought, which is more important even than correct grammar, and variety of form, which is essential to force of expression, are largely matters of sentence grouping.

46. What Shall Each Sentence Contain?—You wish to develop an idea, not in a simple sentence, but in a group of sentences. What part of the general development shall be allotted to each sentence? Consider the following paragraph:

> The system was very simple, consisting of fines for every conceivable mistake. These fines were deducted from our pay, and the result was that at the end of a week of hard work we might actually owe the company money. This case really had occurred once or twice and there was no doubt the plan was extremely profitable to the company, but you can understand why we girls objected.

What are the ideas here? (1) The plan itself; (2) how it worked; (3) the attitude of the company; (4) the attitude of the girls. There can be no wise correction of the sentences until these ideas are seen in their relation to each other. Once they are perceived, however, correction becomes the easiest thing in the world, because these ideas have after all been set down in their right order. We write:—

(1) The system was very simple. It consisted of fines for every conceivable mistake, deducted from our pay. (2) The result was that at the end of a week of hard work, we might actually owe the company money, and indeed once or twice a girl had been in this situation. (3) There was no doubt that the plan was extremely profitable to the company. (4) But you can understand why we girls objected to it.

What is the inference from this revision? Sentences are very elastic affairs; not like pint cups into which you can get only so much, but like a small boy's pockets, which will hold whatever he chooses to put into them,—lunch, bait and fish. The skilful writer puts into each sentence, therefore, all he needs; he fits his sentences to his ideas, not his ideas to some one form of sentence. No matter how much lunch he takes, or how much bait, he gets it all in easily. *But he does not put lunch, bait and fish all into the same pocket.*

47. The Relation of One Sentence to Another.—Every sentence serves a double purpose; it has a meaning of its own, and it helps to make clearer the meaning of some other sentence. Take such a sentence as the following:

She is wearing a blue dress and has a nurse with her.

This seems absurdly disconnected. But let us add another sentence.

You can pick out Dorothy easily enough. She is wearing a blue dress and has a nurse with her.

At once the original sentence becomes plain. Another illustration:

One is the Red, the other the Arkansas.

What does it mean?

There are two big rivers in that country. One is the Red, the other the Arkansas.

Every sentence you write, then, should be both set down and revised in the light of *its relation to other sentences*. This is really the great matter of composition. Even a careful arrangement of topics, even accurate grammar, are of less importance. (See page 40 for a discussion of what is really the same matter, only there looked at from the point of view of the paragraph.) A further enumeration of *devices* for exhibiting this relation is perhaps more confusing than helpful. You must think each case out for yourself. Yet certain advice may be given.

(1) Use relation-words (*however, and, but, nevertheless,* etc.) freely.

(2) When you merely repeat an idea in other words, however, do not make the mistake of using a connective. *He was a strange boy, and he always liked to play alone.* Here the same idea is repeated; *and,* therefore, is not wanted, and should be stricken out. *He was a strange boy; he always liked to play alone.*

(3) Keep the same subject and use parallel structure when you can. Note the value in coherence of the constant repetition of *he* in the following paragraph:—

A child's imagination deals all with lay figures and stage properties. When his story comes to the fighting, he must rise, get something by way of a sword, and have a set-to with a piece of furniture until he is out of breath. When he comes to ride with the king's pardon, he must bestride a chair . . . ; if his romance involves an accident upon a cliff, he must clamber in person about the chest of drawers and fall bodily upon the carpet before his imagination is satisfied. . . . Nothing can stagger a child's faith; he accepts the clumsiest substitutes and can swallow the most staring incongruities. The chair he has been besieging as a castle is taken away for the accommodation of a morning visitor, and he is nothing abashed; he can skirmish by the hour with a stationary coal-scuttle; in the midst of the enchanted garden, he can see without shock the gardener soberly digging potatoes for the day's dinner.—STEVENSON, *Child's Play.*

(4) Above all things remember that an idea can be expressed in many ways. A sentence is easier to twist and turn than a rubber band. If one form seems incoherent, try another. Make two sentences into one; or cut one in two. Learn to think of your sentences not only by themselves, as units, but as *parts of a group;* it is these *groups of sentences* which really develop your ideas.

Exercise.

Rewrite the following passages, re-arranging the sentences as you please, to bring out most clearly the various ideas and their relation to each other.

1. We have described the dismemberment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830. We have also described the years succeeding, that kingdom, which included what we know as Holland and Belgium, having been the work of the Congress of Vienna. Created as a bulwark against France, the Belgians had revolted, but supported in the end by some of the great powers, they had won their independence, and since then there have been two kingdoms.

2. There are three reasons why you had better not take up the newspaper profession, the first being the matter of health, in regard to which you have not the requisite physical strength to stand the nervous strain and the hard work, and in the second place the character of the work itself. It is often unpleasant, if not actually repellent, and though it may give you a short cut to a general knowledge of life, in the end, for the third reason, it is likely to place a definite limit on your literary achievement.

3. A number of people gathered around to watch him crank up the machine and he started off gaily waving his hand, but almost immediately they were lost to view and he entered a stretch of woods. These woods were so dense that he was unaware of a gathering darkness overhead and was much surprised on coming out on the other side to find himself facing a driving rain. But hastily he turned up his collar.

4. Swimming is not so easy as it seems when you are standing beside the pool watching the others. But in the water you go

through the exercises and are as stiff as a yard stick and when you let go of the pole you go to the bottom of the tank, though of course they fish you out immediately. And in many cases, a feeling that you must struggle to keep above water causes your sinking, but you cannot seem to help the feeling that you are going to drown.

5. My brother and I decided one summer to go on a camping trip through the Adirondacks, and everything was in readiness. We had bought the necessary outfit, and mapped out our route for one month ahead. The route was to take us through the whole north woods, but my brother was suddenly taken ill and had typhoid fever and our trip was completely spoilt.

6. The flames had already burst through the roof when the fire engine arrived, dashing madly around the corner followed by the hook and ladder, and almost running over some of the crowd that had gathered in the street. They sent up a yell when they saw it, and the firemen soon had long coils of snaky hose directed at the root of the trouble, and were swarming up the ladders like ants. The first one to reach the top heard a warning shout from those below, and the next instant there was a thundering crash as a chimney tumbled.

7. The University of ——— offers help in various ways to students who need it, and they do not feel that they are disgraced because they are working for what they get. Scholarships are awarded to those who do excellent work in their studies, and if they do good work but not quite so good, they can get a service scholarship. It also finds outside employment for such as desire it, so there are plenty of ways for the poor student who cares enough for an education to get it.

8. The affair was ridiculous and trivial in the extreme, and her lack of any sense of humor was the cause of the trouble, in the first place. Having said she would do it if the others did, she backed out, and they, thinking that she would be with them, went ahead and sent the letter, signing her name with theirs, and then when she heard about it, she told the whole thing, but they were so provoked at her that they did not care about anything else.

9. Will you kindly inform the chairman of the heat and ventilation committee that the conditions in the class-room can be improved, if he will take the trouble to come and see for himself that the air draught is out of order? It has not worked well ever since it was installed, and it can be fixed without much expense

or trouble, but the authorities are very careless in regard to these matters.

10. He wrote his mother that he would be home sometime during the following week, but that he had met an interesting man from the west who was surveying in Arizona for the Government and knew some of their old friends, and not to expect him until she saw him. But in any case, he would be home by the end of the week. He had an engagement that could not be broken for Saturday, and he sent her his love.

48. Variety of Sentence-Form.—Sentences must be considered as parts of a group, for the sake not only of clearness but also of *variety*. No form of the sentence, simple, complex, or compound, is intrinsically better than another. But variety of form is essential. A succession of short or long sentences, all of the same general construction, stupefies the attention of the reader, and indicates also that the writer is not properly distinguishing the units of his thought. No rules can be given for securing variety of form, but certain types of construction may very well be studied.

The Simple Sentence. The value of the simple sentence is in its unmistakable concentration upon the main idea.

The man disappeared.
He took the ring.
We stared at each other.

Now a simple sentence may be very considerably complicated without losing this power of concentrated emphasis. Complication is the result of using

(*a*) a compound subject, or a compound predicate or both.

(*b*) modifying phrases.

The following, for example, are simple sentences:

The man, the vehicle, and the pursuer all disappeared in a cloud of dust.

He took it, thrust it in his pocket, bowed very low, and left me.

The three pirates and I simultaneously leaped up and stared at each other.

There is a rapidity and clear vigor about such sentences that makes them particularly suitable for narration, or exposition of familiar matters. They hurry the mind, but do not confuse it.

The Complex Sentence. The complex sentence is less concentrated than the simple, and less symmetrical. On the other hand, it allows the presentation of more subtle ideas, of statements which demand qualifications and conditions. As the rapid simple sentence is the fundamental type for narration, so the complex sentence is the fundamental type for difficult exposition and argument. In the use of the complex sentence, two things are chiefly to be considered, the *form* and the *position* of the dependent clause or clauses.

Form. A dependent clause may be formed by the use of a participle.

Not knowing where we were, we stopped.

Or by the use of an infinitive:

To find out where we were, we stopped.

Or by the use of a subordinate conjunction:

We stopped, because we did not know where we were.

Or by the use of a relative pronoun:

We stopped at the request of the man who was leading.

Or by the use of a relative adverb:

We stopped when we found out that nobody knew where we were.

That form is best in any given case, of course, which best presents the exact shade of the writer's idea. But to adhere to one form only, throughout many sentences, is unwise.

Position. If a complex sentence has but one dependent clause, obviously that clause may be placed either before or after the independent clause. For reasons of emphasis, it should, when possible, be placed before; this arrangement, however, the necessity of first being clear will often not permit. In sentences having more than one dependent clause, the question of position is still more complicated. If the dependent clauses stand in the same relation to the rest of the sentence, they usually should not only be alike in form, but should also be placed both before or both after the part of the sentence they modify.

(a) While I was in college I kept up my interest in stamp-collecting, and even while I was in the law-school.

(b) While I was in college, and even while I was in the law-school, I kept up my interest in stamp-collecting.

If the dependent clauses do not stand in the same grammatical relation, considerations of clearness and emphasis, *in that order*, should govern their use.

Consider the variety of position and form of the dependent clauses in the following passage:

"The dream commenced with a music *which now I often heard in dreams—a music of preparation and of awakening suspense; a music like the opening of the Coronation anthem*, and *which, like that, gave the feeling of a vast march*—of infinite cavalcades filing off—and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, *then suffering some mysterious eclipse*, and *laboring* in some dread extremity. *Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom*—a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting, was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music; *with which my sympathy was the more insupportable* from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (*where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement*), had the power, and

yet had not the power *to decide it.* I had the power *if I could raise myself, to will it;* and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of an expiable guilt. *Deeper than ever plummet sounded,* I lay inactive." —De Quincey, *Confessions of an Opium Eater.*

The Compound Sentence. The compound sentence allies itself with the simple, as the compound-complex allies itself with the complex. But one further suggestion about using the simplest form of compound sentence may be added, in the words of Punch's advice to those about to wed, "Don't." It is one of the loosest and most monotonous types possible. (As an illustration of its employment, see the example given on p. 68.) But compound sentences complicated by compound subjects and predicates, and relieved of their bareness by modifying phrases, are indispensable, especially in narration.

SECTION IV.

Words.

49. The Characteristics of a Good Vocabulary.—A word is something more than a mere combination of letters. It is the definite symbol of an idea. A man's words are so intimately connected with his thought that almost always a small vocabulary means an immature or feeble thinker; and although a fluent speaker or writer has not necessarily anything to say worth listening to, it is true nevertheless that to widen one's vocabulary is to increase the range of one's ideas.

No man can write effectively unless his vocabulary possesses three fundamental characteristics: the first is *exactness*, the second *suggestiveness*, and the third *propriety*.

50. Exactness.—The exact word is the word which expresses with precision the writer's meaning. Most often the exact word is the specific word, that is to say, the word which is narrow in its range. *Vegetable* is a general word, *cabbage* is specific, because it narrows the idea contained in vegetable, it points out a particular kind of vegetable. *Building material* is general, *brick* and *lath* and *plaster* and *scantling* are all specific words. *Some distance* is general, *mile* is specific. *Scoundrel* is general, *thief* is specific; *burglar* is more specific still. You should use specific words constantly for two reasons: in the first place for your own sake, and in the second place for the sake of your reader. For your own sake, because when you use a specific word you force yourself to realize exactly what your idea is, and so teach yourself to avoid those vague-

nesses, those "glittering generalities," which are the curse of careless thinking. For your reader's sake, because most people think in images, not in abstractions; and it is the specific word which gives the image. "My mother," says one girl, "when I left home after Christmas, bade me an affectionate farewell." "What do you mean by an affectionate farewell?" asks another. "Well," says the first, "she gave me a kiss and a ten-dollar bill." That is specification.

Yet there are times when the specific word does not so precisely express the meaning of the writer as the general word. Arnold writes: "But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself, but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that." Here the phrase, "a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful and becoming," is general in its diction and not specific, because Arnold's idea was a general and not a specific idea. When you write home: "I have been going out a good deal in the last two months and having a very good time, but I am now tired enough of it to want to settle down to the hardest kind of hard work," your phrases, "going out a good deal," "having a good time," "tired enough," and "the hardest kind of hard work," are all general. Had you written, "I have been attending three dances, a play, and a concert each week since the 17th of January, and I have gained six pleasant new acquaintances and accumulated a large stock of dance programs and ticket stubs; but I have now got so tired that I go to sleep every day in my classes, and I mean to get to bed at nine o'clock every night after a ten-hour day spent in study," you would have substituted specific terms for general and your sentence would have gained in vividness. But it would not have

expressed your idea with the same exactness. It would have become a caricature of what you really meant. A little study of the modern magazine-story will show you to what a wild extent the craze for specification has led many writers. Let your phraseology then be general or specific to express as exactly as you can your meaning.

Note, however, that nobody can write with exactness who has not a reasonably wide vocabulary. It is possible to travel comfortably in a foreign country with a stock of perhaps five or six hundred words. Shakespeare expressed all his complicated ideas with not more than fifteen thousand words. The language affords a variety of nearer three hundred thousand than two. How large is your own stock?

You wish to convey the information that a certain man of your acquaintance walks with very short steps in almost a ridiculous fashion. The verb *mince* will give the idea exactly. No other verb will. If you have not that word in your vocabulary, how can you exactly convey your meaning?

What are the differences among *culture* and *education* and *scholarship* and *knowledge* and *wisdom?* You hear every one of these words used almost every day. But are they all in your vocabulary? That is to say, do you know exactly what each one means? For as a matter of fact most of us possess two vocabularies: one, so to speak, for comprehension, and one for expression, one consisting of words which we understand and the other of words which we actually employ. *Sustained, concentrate, pecuniary, disproportioned, indisputable, reiterate, perpetual, superiority, induce, ardent, precision, lamentation, resound:* these words, taken from a single paragraph of Matthew Arnold, you understand the meaning of in every case: but how many of them do you actually use? Words far simpler—*headstrong, mumble,*

ransack, squabble, flinch, snug, haggle,—do you use any of these even? *Snatch, seize, grasp, clasp, clutch,*—would you use one of these according to the circumstances, or would you say indifferently *get hold of?* Even of the class of words which we may call mechanical, which are employed not to express ideas in themselves but to tie the ideas of other words together—*moreover, notwithstanding, in consequence, nevertheless, except, thence,*—do you employ these terms, or do you stick to such old friends as *and, but, for, however,* and particularly *so?*

How shall you increase your vocabulary? By reading, to get a larger stock of words you understand; and then by deliberately *using these words* in your writing. There is no other way. You, more certainly than anyone else, know when you feel cramped in the expression of your ideas. On such occasions take the dictionary, turn to the old familiar word you are tempted to use, and find two or three synonyms for it. Look up these synonyms, and use the one which most precisely fits your thought.

The matter of reduction of predication enters in here. Often you use half a dozen words because you cannot think of the right one. He was not exactly dull, *but he did not like to talk when anybody was around who was not one of his intimate friends.* He was not exactly dull, *but preferred silence except among his intimate friends.* Be sure of this: in the ordinary affairs of life, the fewer words you use to make yourself clear, the better chance you have of being listened to. Widen your vocabulary, therefore, not that you may use many or large words, but that you may use few, and those few exact for the occasion.

51. Suggestiveness.—*Suggestiveness* in diction is the power to stir the imagination. The most suggestive words are those which are in themselves familiar but which are used in a new context. Take for example the verb *ripple.*

Used in the phrase, *The water rippled over the stones*, nothing could be more conventional and familiar. The phrase is dull. It has been used so often that it has become stale. But in the sentence, *The color rippled in her cheek*, the word rippled strikes freshly upon our attention. Yet it has not changed its form; it has only changed its context. There is nothing interesting or suggestive in the phrase, *the army marched*. To say *the story marched*, however, is to use a suggestive phrase, and to speak of *the marching stars in heaven* is to be more suggestive still. Take the word *trampling:* standing alone it conveys no very striking meaning. But as Wordsworth uses it: "the lightning, the fierce wind and trampling waves," it becomes notable. "Here, where the moors stretch free in the *high blue* afternoon, are the *marching* sun and the *talking* sea"; high, blue, marching, talking, are all effective here, not in themselves, but in their fresh relations. "The proud republic hath not stooped to *cheat* and *scramble* in the marketplace": cheat and scramble are not uncommon words, but they become vivid in their connection here. (1) The sun *shines*. (2) "Roses that down the alley *shine* afar." The whole difference in the value of the verb *shine* in these two sentences is in its relation to the context. A familiar word has associations, a definite meaning known to everybody. Transfer that word to a new context and it carries its old associations with it and so becomes doubly valuable. Unusual words, such as Carlyle, for instance, Stevenson, and De Quincey are so fond of using, lack to some extent this suggestive power.

It is usually, too, the *specific* word which stirs the imagination, which gives the reader something to hold fast to. "The barn was beautifully decorated," does not inspire the imagination. But "The barn was crossed with strings of holly and hung with Chinese lanterns," calls up a picture

to the reader's eye. Half the popularity of Macaulay, who, with all his faults as a stylist, is still the most widely read English historian of the nineteenth century, is due to his constant use of specific instead of general words. "England," he writes, "at the time of which we are treating abounded with fickle and selfish politicans who transferred their support to every government as it rose." That is an idea expressed in general terms. But Macaulay goes on: "who *kissed the hand* of the King in 1640 and *spat in his face* in 1649, who *shouted with glee* equally when Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall and when he was *dug up* to be *hanged* at Tyburn." So one wise counsel for whoever wishes to interest his reader is: *Use specific words.*

Here comes in also the use of *figures of speech,*—simile, metaphor, personification, and the rest. The classification of such figures is of scientific interest, but, for us, of comparatively little importance. The purpose of the figures of speech is always to stir the imagination and so to assist the understanding of the reader.

Their value depends (1) on their *applicability* and (2) on their *freshness.* "All my old opinions were only stages on the way to the one I now hold." Here is an idea stated; do you understand it? Suppose a figure employed to make it clear: "Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through New Haven and Dieppe. They were very good places to pass through, and I am none the less at my destination." You know that New Haven and Dieppe are on the road to Paris; you recognize the likeness between passing through them and passing through stages of opinion, and so you come to understand the author's meaning. His figure of speech, in short, is applicable. *No* figure is a good figure, however beautiful it may be in itself, unless, as here, it explains the obscure or the unknown

in terms of the well known. "Tom was as tall as a Titan." Unless you know something of the Titans the figure is for you poor, because it compares Tom's height to something unknown. "Tom was as big as a house." You do not know Tom; but you know houses and therefore you can imagine Tom.

In the second place, to have value a figure of speech must have freshness. "He was as bold as a lion." "Her eyes shot fire." "Night, the dark sister of bright day." These figures are applicable and clear, but they are poor because they are old. How shall you secure fresh figures of speech? Only by the power of an active imagination, which observes a likeness in some particular between things which are in most respects utterly dissimilar. On this point Oliver Wendell Holmes says:

"There is no power I envy so much . . . as that of seeing analogies and making comparisons. I don't understand how it is that some minds are continually coupling thoughts or objects that seem not in the least related to each other, until all at once they are put in a certain light and you wonder that you did not always see that they were as like as a pair of twins. It appears to me a sort of miraculous gift." —*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

But it is well to remember that unless you have an unusually imaginative mind, the simpler you make your figures the better. The figure drawn from your own experience *may* be ineffective; one drawn in elaborate resemblance to something you have read *will* be. "The people on Michigan Avenue were *thick as bees*." "My face was *red as fire*, and I stood there *like a post*, trying to think what to do." "My conscience *balked*." These figures are at least not repellent. "Her eyes were *like sapphires, set with the diamonds of her tears*." "My college course is *the Alps, beyond which lies the sunny Italy of theological study*."

On these, what loving care was lavished by their writers!—and yet we can only smile at the flamboyance of their effect.

52. Propriety.—Finally, every word must be used with *propriety*. There is good form in words, just as in manners. A man who eats with his knife or wears tan shoes with evening clothes attracts unfavorable notice. Accuracy and suggestiveness are more important than propriety, just as generosity and courage and enthusiasm are more important than good form. But there are few things more noticeable than bad form; and so to educated people there are few things more noticeable and more annoying than a lack of propriety in diction. Who sets good form? One's community, one's locality, one's nation, the whole educated English-speaking world. And so with words. And one must know whether the words he would use are or are not acceptable in the polite society of letters. One calls his parents *ma* and *pa*; another, *mama* and *papa*; a third, *mother* and *father*. The meaning is as clear in one case as in the other, but the first two terms have not the sanction of propriety. A word may be well known, and yet not acceptable; such a word is *ain't*. *Enthuse* is another of the same breed; so is *complected*. It may be too old, like *avaunt*, or too new, like *foozle*, or too foreign, like *récherché* and *chic*, or too provincial, like *tote*. For whatever reason, it is a *barbarism* till the language accepts it to fellowship.

Or it may be an acceptable word misused. *Fix* is such a word; it means to fasten, not to repair. *Transpire* is another; it means to leak out, to become known—not to happen. Of these *improprieties*, so-called ordinary speech and writing are full. Their use, however, is a sure sign of ignorance, and to avoid them is as necessary as to avoid any other social solecism.

Here comes in also the question of *slang*. Some slang is bad because it is in bad taste. All slang is undesirable

because to use it narrows your vocabulary and so narrows the range of your ideas. Take the word *guy* and the phrases *cut it out* or *beat it*. They were so popular in 1911 that the average boy scarcely needed other phrases. The result was that he learned no others, and no matter what his meaning was he forced it into the rigid and unnatural limits of these terms. The idea behind slang is a good one: a search for the power and suggestiveness that come of a fresh use of words. Says George Ade in one of his fables, speaking of an overworked shopgirl, "And every Saturday night her employer *crowded* three dollars on her." The verb is vigorous and picturesque. But the trouble is that the vocabulary of slang changes constantly, and if you use slang, instead of increasing the number of words at your command you merely go through the process of substituting new phrases for the old. You do not increase your stock. There was a time ten years ago when the phrase "come off the perch" was expressive of an immense number of ideas. Who uses it now? "Cut it out," which is perhaps its nearest equivalent, is in turn passing away.

And, furthermore, the reader feels instinctively that written composition is of a higher order than the spoken word, and should be, therefore, more accurate in form. The difference between writing and speaking in this matter is something like the difference between your dress in camp and at a summer hotel. If you were telling a friend of an automobile accident you might say:

"The car came up the hill like a shot. All of a sudden it twisted somehow into the wall and out again, and before you could say boo it was upset. Somebody gave a yell and then it was all over." If you were writing, the chances are you would put it rather: "The car shot up the slope, half turned in a flash, leaped into the embankment, ricocheted and flung itself over and over into the ditch. Someone

cried out once—that was all." Neither form is perhaps better than the other, but the more careful diction of the second is suited to written composition. And this demand of greater care in writing finally debars you from the use of slang.

But fully as bad as slang is an undue splendor of diction —"fine writing" as it is called. The lady who wears her diamonds in the morning is socially condemned. Equally condemned is he who uses an obviously elaborate phrasing in simple situations. Mr. Micawber, in David Copperfield, is the great example of the "fine writer" in literature. With him, *stipendiary emoluments* means *pay; expire of inanition* means *starve; grinding penurious circumstances* means *lack of money; miscellaneous catalogue of unscrupulous chicaneries* means *various petty thefts*, and so on. There are many Mr. Micawbers at present, some of them writing for country newspapers. But they are thinning out. Few people after high-school days find such phraseology even amusing any more; the practice of calling a spade a spade is constantly more popular.

53. Tone.—Exactness, suggestiveness, and propriety in the choice of words are all, to some extent, subject to a higher law of diction—namely, that your phrasing should be suited to your subject-matter and to your audience. One who, like Milton in his pamphlet on the Freedom of the Press, or like the authors of the Declaration of Independence, is filled with a sense of the nobility and worth of his subject, and is writing for the whole nation, will choose only words whose associations are dignified and noble. One who, like William Dean Howells or Mark Twain, writes usually in a conversational and friendly spirit, on subjects of general interest, will permit himself a less formal phraseology. The advertising man, desirous of selling goods, will study his audience and fit his vocabulary to

their understanding. The right tone is a question of taste; but it is an essential question. Of two petitions recently presented by undergraduates to a college faculty, asking exemption from discipline, one ended "Allow me this privilege, and I promise you that never again shall my young feet stray from the straight path of duty into the tangled and thorny thicket of evil-doing." It was greeted by laughter, and disregarded. The other petition declared "Like Jeffries at Reno, I find that when I buck the faculty I am up against a better man. If you will give me the benefit of the doubt this time I will never get into the ring with your respectable body again." It shared the fate of the first. Both the aspiring authors had mistaken the proper tone. The applicant for a position who tries to be facetious, the newspaper reporter who tries to be eloquent, the freshman theme-writer who tries to be anything but simple and clear, are all examples of those in a similar error.

54. Number of Words.—Next in value to command of a flexible vocabulary is the power to *cut out unnecessary words*. From an early stage in composition you should train yourself in the use of the blue pencil. He who makes one word serve where two have previously been used is a benefactor of his reader. Professed literary men, like De Quincey and Stevenson, and on the other hand newspaper men who profess to despise the "literary flavor," agree in this. *Reduction of predication*, already often mentioned, is concerned here also. Two further points may be noted.

1. Avoid superfluous words. It *disappeared from my view*. The house was *surrounded* by hills *on all sides*. He *rushed hurriedly* by. The water was *calm and quiet*. *From whence* he came, they were *powerless and unable* to discover.

How persistent is the habit of using superfluous words may be illustrated from a recent text-book on composition, which cites complacently "The drooping boughs of the willow lashed violently in the heavy wind" as an improvement upon, "The boughs of the willow lashed in the wind"! It is just this inclusion of unnecessary adjectives and adverbs that deadens style.

2. Avoid the repetition of idea. He was a *noble hero.* The army was *totally annihilated.* The house was *violently* shaken *to its foundations.* The *whole* town was *burnt* in a *general conflagration.* The *high* hills *towered* above us.

Use as many words as you need to make your meaning clear; a thousand which bring out your idea are far better than a hundred which do not. But *use no words which you can spare.*

55. Idiom.—Every language has hundreds of phrases which cannot be literally translated into another language. In every language also are turns of speech which cannot be justified on sound logic only, but are the result of continued and general usage. Such things make up idiom. Able *to do*; capable of *doing*; sent *to jail*, sent *to the penitentiary*; to *make* a few *remarks*, to *say* a few *words*; an *aversion to* spiders, a *hatred of* spiders; he *confided in* me, he *confided his secret to* me; his *mind* was *easy*, his *heart* was *at rest*—these and a thousand other such phrases must be known. The foreigner, who does not know them, writes and speaks in a way to amuse us; we amuse him equally when we use his language. The acquisition of idiom is preliminary to any mastery of expression.

Perhaps the most constant violations of idiom, by college students at least, occur in translations from the languages. The sentence-order (see p. 74) of English is so different from that of Latin, or French, or German that a word for word translation is always awkward and usually mislead-

ing or obscure. "Cæsar having said these things, the assembly was dismissed," is an accurate translation from the Latin, but English idiom demands, "When Cæsar had ended, the assembly was dismissed." "The young girl became over and over red" may be a literal rendition from the French, but it is not English. Nobody, however, thinks of using such phrases *except* in translation, and no detailed discussion of the fault is necessary.

Exercises.

Exactness.—1. Make a list of all the specific words you can think of which are included in the meaning of each of the following general words:

Think—*e. g.*, ponder, meditate, scheme, plan, believe.

(Note that here as always, one word is not *exactly synonymous* with another. "Believe" exactly expresses one shade of meaning contained in "think"; "meditate" exactly expresses another; but "believe" and "meditate" are not synonymous at all.)

Verbs: walk, say, like, convey, resist, change, study, work.
Nouns: fear, stream, happiness, education, child, difficulty.
Adjectives: warm, bright, sincere, good, elegant, mean, tired, dull, quiet, rapid.

2. Frame sentences which shall show clearly the differences in meaning of the words on your list; *e. g.*, He pondered this question all day. She talked a good deal, but thought very little. He believed in the principle of free-trade. She planned to bring the two together. He schemed and plotted all in vain.

3. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with words which shall exactly express the writer's meaning as you understand it.

I found each wave, instead of the big ——— ——— mountain it looks from shore, was for all the world like my ——— of hills on the dry land, full of ——— and smooth places and ———. The coracle [boat], left to herself, turning from side to side, ——— so to speak, her way through these lower parts, and ——— the steep slopes and higher ——— summits of the wave.

"Well, now," thought I to myself, "it is plain I must lie where I am, and not ——— the balance; but it is plain, also, that I can put the paddle over the side, and from time to time ——— her a ——— or two toward land." No sooner thought upon than done. There I lay on my elbows, in a most ——— attitude, and every now and then gave a ——— stroke or two to turn her head to shore.

It was very ———, and ——— work, yet I did ——— gain ground; and, as I drew near the Cape of the Woods, though I saw I must ——— miss that point, I had still ——— some hundred yards. I could see the ——— green tree-tops ——— together in the breeze, and I felt sure I should ——— the next promontory without fail."—STEVENSON, *Treasure Island*.

Suggestiveness.—1. Use the following words as effectively as you can in sentences; *e. g.*, roguish. "Roguish laughter" is trite and dull; "a roguish and stupid fellow" is exact; "the roguish days and sleep-filled nights of childhood" is suggestive.

Murmur, cosy, nice, sulky, gorgeous, elegant, magnificent, stupid, cheap, clip (V.), shine (V.), speedy, refreshment, maiden (N.), hustle, rush, snatch.

2. In the following passage, substitute where you can, more suggestive words for those in italic.

We had a heavy thunderstorm at Natchez, another at Vicksburg, and still another about fifty miles below Memphis. They had an oldfashioned energy which had long been unfamiliar to me. This third storm was accompanied by a *strong* wind. We tied up to the bank when we saw the *disturbance* coming, and everybody left the pilot-house but me. The wind *agitated* the young trees, exposing the pale under side of the leaves; and gust

after gust followed in quick succession, *moving* the branches violently up and down, and to this side and that, and *creating changes* of green and white, according to the side of the leaf that was exposed, and these waves *followed* after each other as do their kind over a wind-tossed field of oats. . . . The river was leaden, all distances the same; and even the *numerous* ranks of white-caps were dully shaded by the *color of the air* through which their *numerous* legions *were seen*. The thunder-peals were constant and deafening; . . . The lightning *came as often* as the thunder. . . . The rain *fell very heavily;* the ear-splitting thunder-peals *were heard* nearer and nearer; the wind increased in fury and began to *remove* boughs and tree-tops and send them sailing away through space; the pilot-house fell to rocking *and otherwise showing the effect of the wind*, and I went down into the hold to see what time it was.—MARK TWAIN (*adapted*).

Propriety.—The following list contains only words which experience has shown that college freshmen *frequently* misuse. They should be looked up in a good dictionary and then used properly in sentences.

Affect, effect; aggravate, tease; alternative; among, between; awfully; balance, remainder; claim, assert, maintain; demean, behave, debase; deadly, deathly; expect, suppose; fix, repair, fasten; healthy, beautiful; lend, loan (barbarism, as a verb); liable, likely; mad, angry; most, almost; nice, agreeable; oral, verbal; party, person; posted, informed; quite, almost, very; school, college; stop, stay; storm, rain.

Idiom.—The following list of idiomatic expressions is meant only to suggest to the student the possibility of making other lists of such expressions for his own profit and amusement:

anticipate *doing* anything (not anticipate *to do*).
agree *with* (a person), agree *to* (a plan).
angry *with* (not *at*).
comply *with* (not *to*).
connect *with* (not *to*).

different *from* (not *to*, or *than*).
dying *of* (not *with*) fever.
an eye *to* anything.
glad *of* (not *for*).
in order *to do* (not *for to do*).
a child *of ten* (or *of ten years*).
the reason *is* (not *is because*).
lay *waste* (not *to waste*).
overlook a fault (not *look over*).
in jail, in *the* penitentiary.
to *get* ready.
to put *through* (a plan), put *by* (money), to be put *out* (annoyed).
to take offense, take heart, take care.
to pluck up courage.

SECTION V.

Punctuation.

56. The Object of Punctuation.—The voice in speech rises and falls, goes on rapidly or pauses. In written composition the place of these inflections of the voice is supplied by *punctuation.*

Punctuation has a double value; it helps to make the relation of ideas *clearer,* and the expression of these ideas *more emphatic.* Consider the following sentences:

I do not believe it.
I? Do not believe it!
He drove away from the yard and crossed the creek without, stopping to water his horses.
He drove away from the yard, and crossed the creek without stopping to water his horses.

Here the changes in punctuation entirely alter the sense. In other cases its effect is upon emphasis.

Go home if you want to.
Go home—if you want to.
Go home!—if you want to.
Go? Home, if you want to!

The law of good sense in punctuation is this: *Use such symbols as will make your meaning clear.* But certain rules for the use of various marks must be definitely learned before this general law can be enforced.

57. The Marks of Punctuation.—*The end of a sentence* is marked by the use of one of three symbols:

(1) *The period* (.) usually.

(2) *The exclamation point* (!) if the sentence is exclamatory.

Down with him!

(3) *The interrogation point* (?) if the sentence is a question.

Who is he?

Divisions of thought *within the sentence* are marked by the comma, semicolon, dash, colon, exclamation point and interrogation point.

The comma (,) indicates (1) a slight break in the grammatical construction, or (2) a slight pause in reading.

(1) The sun was already up, John already at work.
Look at the girl on the right, the tall one.
Nobody needs practice in composition more than the businessman, unless it is the engineer.
The bench, which was an old one, gave way under him.
(2) Hail, Cæsar!
A long, dull, dusty, tiresome street it was.
"Bring it here," she demanded.
He was furious; she, calm.

The modern tendency is to omit commas unless they are necessary to the sense, or the need for a pause in reading is obvious. In the following sentences some writers would have commas, most would not:

To stand by his country in her time of need is every man's privilege.
They sat down to a dinner which lasted till midnight.
Whatever he says I will agree to.
He saw that he could be of no further service and so turned sadly and walked away.
Seeing that he could be of no further service he turned sadly and walked away.

He cried "I have it now!"
A tall strong lad he was.

The semicolon (;) indicates a greater break in thought or change in construction than the comma.

He was furious; she was calm.
Take it away; I do not like it.
It was spring; the sun was shining; and side by side we galloped over the prairie.
I staggered to my feet again, bruised and somewhat stunned; the negro had paused in surprise, perhaps in terror, some half way between me and the wreck; my uncle was already far away, bounding from rock to rock; and I thus found myself torn for a time between two duties (*Stevenson*).

Note that the semicolon, standing exactly half way between the comma and the period, may do duty now for the one and now for the other. And on the other hand, the tendency of good newspaper writing seems to be to do without the semicolon almost altogether, using the comma or the period instead.

The dash (—) is used to indicate *abrupt* changes in thought or construction.

I might tell you—but I don't choose to.
When Shaw was coming home—if as I say it *was* Shaw—he went for some reason round by the Windward Isles.
Some lady—Mrs. Hamilton, perhaps—had known him before. When she saw him there among those savages—well, naturally she was astounded. He—could it be?

The dash is an emphatic, almost violent substitute for the comma, the semicolon, or the parenthesis. Young writers often use it too much, as they use italics too much, and so give a kind of hysterical effect to their style.

The colon (:) has but one use, a use all its own and

highly important: as here, it *points forward* to something which is to come.

I had one invaluable menu: bread and water for breakfast, bread and water for luncheon, bread and water for dinner.
The oft-repeated name fell once more from his lips: "Aileen!"
I wish you to note this fact: you are in my power.

The marks of exclamation and interrogation are the *only* marks of punctuation which are used both at the end of sentences and within sentences. Their intention is the same in any case. We write "'Are you here?' he asked," or "'Never, never!' he cried," because the question and the exclamation end before the sentence does. So again:

Hail, Cæsar! We salute you.
Shall we yield, men? or shall we not rather defy him?

Besides these, there are other symbols, the most important being the *marks of quotation* (" " ' '), the *apostrophe* ('), the *parenthesis* ( ) and *brackets* [ ].

Double marks of quotation are used to point out the beginning and end of all direct quotation. Single marks indicate the beginning and end of a quotation within a quotation.

"I am," he said.
"Why not?" was her very natural question.
"Well," replied Alfred thoughtfully, "I heard him say 'I refuse,' and I supposed he knew what he was talking about."
"'Silence is golden' is a useful proverb sometimes," laughed the broker.

(It is unfortunate that in England exactly the opposite practice prevails.)

Observe that whenever a quotation is interrupted, quotation marks are used to mark the interruption.

"I?" he whispered. "You can't mean me? Why"—he smiled a little wistfully, "they used to call me 'poor old Ned' even there in Riverton." He smiled again. "No, you can't mean me."

This usage is simple good sense. The reader is entitled to know exactly where the quotation begins and ends: what are the writer's words, what he has borrowed or put into the mouth of a character.

The apostrophe is used to indicate the possessive case, or omitted letters.

John's; can't.

The parenthesis is used to enclose explanatory words, phrases or clauses which might be omitted without altering the grammatical structure of the sentence.

She (I call her thus, because I never knew her name) alone inspired me.

His efforts were not appreciated by the audience (they are a stupid set in Hazelville), but how glorious I thought him!

NOTE.—A parenthesis is never rightly used to enclose words which the writer intends to be omitted.

Brackets [ ] are used to enclose any editorial additions to manuscript.

This scheme [the Gladstone plan] was outlined in 1886.

58. Capitalization.—A capital is invariably used for the first letter of the first word of every (1) sentence, (2) line of poetry, (3) direct quotation.

All proper nouns—*e. g.*, John, August, Germany—and many proper adjectives—*e. g.*, French, Baptist, Republican—begin with a capital. Usage is, however, not uniform, and each doubtful case must be looked up.

59. Italicization.—Italics are used to emphasize particular words or phrases. But their use grows on a writer: soon he employs them so constantly that their whole effect is lost. Like slang, they are sometimes valuable, but on the whole better left out of your writing altogether.

PART II.

THE KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

60. Introductory.—All writing may be for convenience divided into four classes, called, respectively, **Exposition, Argumentation, Description,** and **Narration.**

The object of *exposition* is to explain, and its appeal is to the intellect.

The object of *argumentation* is to convince, and its appeal is likewise to the intellect.

The object of *description* is to present or suggest material things, and its appeal is to the imagination through the senses.

The object of *narration* is to record incidents, and its appeal is to the imagination through the emotions.

In other words, exposition explains, argumentation persuades, and the prime object of both is to be clear; description deals with things, narration with events, and the prime object of both is to be interesting.

It must be borne in mind that *this classification is merely for convenience of study.* A writer seldom deliberately sets himself to write an exposition, an argument, a description, a narration, as such. He has something to say, and says it. We, reviewing his work, perceive that what he has written is chiefly expository, or chiefly narrative. We may find, we often do find, that such and such paragraphs are of one sort of writing, such and such paragraphs of another. We may even find examples of all four kinds

in a single paragraph. The novelist argues, explains, describes; the writer of text-books whose object is almost wholly explanatory, narrates and argues by the way. But, for convenience of study, as has just been said, it is nevertheless possible and desirable to separate and consider separately these four forms.

SECTION VI.

Exposition.

Of these four forms of writing the most important, the basic form, is *exposition*—writing which explains.

61. The Material of Exposition.—Exposition deals with ideas, not with things; with the general, not with the particular. You can explain *the principle of the steam-engine*, without reference to any engine in particular; or *kindness*, without thinking of any one person; or the *formation of glaciers*, without having in mind any individual glacier. A word expressive of a general idea is called a *term*. It is the business of exposition to make terms clear.

62. Exposition in Relation to Description and Narration.—To understand any term, as *steam-engine* or *cloud*, we must often, however, have an image of some representative of that term—of some particular steam-engine or some particular cloud. Here description aids exposition; here, indeed, it is difficult to draw the line between them. If you wish a friend to understand how clouds are formed, you will very likely describe to him some particular cloud, and, using it as an illustration, lead him on to the comprehension of clouds in general. If you wish to tell what you understand by *goodness*, you may describe some one of your acquaintance who is good, and generalize from him. That is the function of the exposition—to generalize. No two clouds are alike, but all clouds have points in common. Description emphasizes the individuality of each cloud; exposition deals only with the points they have in common.

As exposition utilizes description, so also it may utilize narration. "How to Build a Boat" is plainly exposition; change the title to "How I Built a Boat" and your article will become narrative in form, a record of events, but in effect will be as much exposition as ever. Any process may be thus explained. A very large part of the so-called "special articles," "fact-stories" in magazines and newspapers, are expositions of this type. We are made to understand wireless telegraphy by an account of the experiences of a correspondent in a wireless-telegraph station; or the United States system of army maneuvers, by the story of a day on the sham battlefield; or how irrigation is carried on in Colorado, by the history of one company. Historical writing is very largely of this type —narrative in form, but expository in its intention.

63. Definition.—Theoretically, pure exposition proceeds by definition. That is to say, it places the particular term under discussion in the class to which it belongs, and relates it to the other members of that class.

Tennis is a game in which a ball is kept in motion by striking it with a racquet.

Here the term *tennis* is placed in the class *game* and related to the other members of that class by the addition of the details *in which a ball is kept in motion by striking it with a racquet.*

64. The Process of Exposition.—But a definition is as a rule only the beginning of exposition. The terms of the definition must in turn be defined. Exposition, moreover, deals most often not with a single term, but with a combination of terms; not with an idea, but with a situation. Practically, then, in exposition, how shall we proceed?

The process of exposition briefly stated is this: *Set forth the factors of the term, or of the situation, and then amplify by details.*

The term factor, in mathematics, is well understood. Six and five are factors of thirty; multiplied together, they produce thirty. By analogy, the factors of a situation are the causes which produce it.

Suppose, as an expert engineer, you are sent out to report on the condition of a region in which some one hopes to engage in iron-mining. You are familiar with the necessities of the business; in other words, you understand the factors of iron-mining. You examine the region in the light of these factors one by one—the quality of the ore, its accessibility, facilities for reduction, facilities for transportation—and you amplify your conclusion in your report, by giving in connection with each topic every important detail which bears on it. That is exposition. Your employers wish to understand the region; you explain it.

Take an even simpler example. You wish to make plain to your friends at home just why your college football team lost its most important game. The loss was due, you think, to three things: a small squad of players, hard fate in accidents, and the lack of a settled policy throughout the season. These are the factors of the situation. You amplify the first by telling how many players there were compared with the number in previous years and the number at other colleges. You amplify the second by reciting the list of accidents, great and small. You amplify the third by showing in detail what the policy was first, and then in detail how it was changed. At the end of your letter your friend understands; you have explained.

Sound exposition depends, therefore, on two things:

(1) Ability to discover the underlying factors of the situation.

(2) The inclusion of plenty of amplifying details.

The first, no text-book on composition can assist you in. Power to think things out—that, which is the supreme test of intellect, you must get for yourself. If you do not, you can never explain anything. But the arrangement of the amplifying detail may be discussed to advantage.

65. Details in Exposition.—You can amplify your topic by using details of three kinds: (1) details which show what your subject *is;* (2) details which show what your subject *is not;* (3) details which show what your subject is *like and unlike.*

Suppose you are explaining the term "gentleman." What *is* a gentleman? He is kind, he is honest; Sir Roger de Coverley was a gentleman. On the other hand, what is he *not?* He is *not* self-conscious; he is not necessarily competent—Twemlow, in *Our Mutual Friend,* was a gentleman. He is not necessarily well-dressed. Finally, what is he *like or unlike?* He is simple and direct in his manners, like a child; but, unlike a child, he is thoughtful for others.

Again, revert to the question of the iron mines just referred to. (1) What does the ore you have been sent to examine, contain? (2) What does it *not* contain? (3) What ore is it like?

Once more: Your football squad this season is very unsatisfactory. (1) It numbers only eighteen men. Only five have played as much as two years. Only four weigh more than 170 pounds. (2) It has no fast runners—not a man can cover a hundred yards in less than eleven seconds. It has no steady or experienced candidates for quarter-back. It has no natural leaders. (3) Compared

with So-and-So College, it is ridiculous in size. It is only half as large as the squad at Such-and-Such, although the colleges are of equal attendance. It is not nearly so large as your own squad of last year.

A final example: What was the character of Abraham Lincoln? (1) He was a man of the people; he was far-seeing; he was patient; he was affectionate. (2) He was not a widely read man; not careful in ordinary speech; not energetic; not systematic. (3) He was quite unlike the leaders of other nations, even of the same period. In his democracy, his accessibility, he was like Garibaldi; but in nothing else. In his point of view he resembled perhaps another Italian, Mazzini, as much as anyone. He bore little resemblance to Washington; less still to Webster, though their early training was not widely different.

66. The Importance of Examples.—These cases all concern one point: the kind of amplifying details possible. All such details are made definite and easily comprehensible by *examples* and *illustrations*. Few people are comfortable when dealing with abstract matters. What do you mean, your friend asks you, by *arrogant?* by *snobbish?* You explain in general terms, and he replies impatiently, "Oh, give me an example." You recite on the "conventional phrasing" of eighteenth-century poetry. "Give me an example of it," says the instructor. "Give me another, and another." A geologist discusses the rate of progress of glaciers, and cites instance after instance of glaciers all over the world. Huxley, Matthew Arnold, Stevenson, Macaulay, William James, every writer who is remarkable for clearness invariably depends on examples to bring out his meaning. Young writers often think, "I have made a general statement and given an example; what more could be asked?"

Another example, and still another; if the general statement is at all obscure, even if it is likely to be new to the reader, give examples in plenty.

67. Order in Exposition.—Concerning the general arrangement of material in exposition, not much need be added to what was said in the chapter on the composition as a whole (*q. v.*). The order of time, or space, or importance, or complexity, or any other logical order suited to the topic, must be determined by the writer. But a word or two on the special problems of the organization of exposition may be said.

(1) Before you write your exposition, make a brief summary which shall include (*a*) the general statement of what you mean to explain and (*b*) in a sentence each, the divisions of this explanation in the order in which you mean to consider them. Write this summary out in a complete paragraph; do not put it into your exposition, but use it *as a guide for yourself.* Such a preliminary summary forces you to think out your plan beforehand. It is better in one way than a topical outline, because it is more definite.

(2) Remember that your exposition is a constant series of repetitions of one process—*the statement of a general truth, and its amplification by detail.* However large your main topic—"Geology," "The History of England," "Ancient Religions"—however finely you subdivide, you come down always from general truth to general truth, amplifying by detail as you go. Every paragraph, therefore, or at least every small group of paragraphs, consists simply of *a statement and its development.* The normal order is the statement first, then its development. When this becomes mechanical, vary the form by letting your explanation and examples lead up to the statement at the end.

"The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his *mind* which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities or weaknesses, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear. . . . *Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage.*"—LAMB.

Here the general statement of the impossibility of adequately presenting Lear on the stage, is led up to. But the normal order is the wiser in most cases.

68. Interest in Exposition.—Because the material of exposition is fact and opinion, and its appeal is to the intellect, it need not, therefore, be cold and uninteresting. Written twenty years ago, Professor Barrett Wendell's *English Composition* still remains the most effective statement of the theory of the subject; and this not more on account of the clearness of its arrangement and the correctness of its conclusions than because of the agreeability of its style. "Be clear" does not mean "Be dull." Turns of phrase, vividness of specification, are as much in place in exposition as in description or narration. For verification of this statement, read the work of those masters of skilful exposition, the best of our modern writers of advertising.

EXERCISES.

Define the following terms, and amplify each definition in a paragraph:

Study, slang, loafing, water, motor-cycle, gingham, college spirit, politeness, love, wind, meanness, yellow.

Explain by general narration:

1. Fraternity initiation.
2. Bird-study with an opera-glass.
3. Why I came to college.
4. Tackling the "dummy."
5. The formation of glaciers.

State briefly the factors of each of the following of which you have definite knowledge:

1. The "serve" in tennis.
2. How to build a fire in the woods.
3. Wordsworth's theory of poetical diction.
4. College honesty.
5. The character of Lady Macbeth.
6. Why I came to college.
7. The best way of studying French.
8. A friend of mine.
9. Carlyle's idea of "The Hero."
10. Trapping rabbits.
11. Bird-study with an opera-glass.
12. The training of a nobleman's son in feudal times.
13. My idea of socialism.
14. Work at a college settlement.
15. Carburetors.

Amplify in the number of paragraphs suggested in each case, one of the following:

1. First base play.
   (1) Handling thrown balls.
   (2) Handling batted balls.
   (3) Team-play with pitcher, catcher, and second baseman

2. Dormitory life for girls.
   (1) The physical side—eating, sleeping, and exercise.
   (2) The social side—getting acquainted.
   (3) The social side—advantages and disadvantages.
   (4) The financial side—expense.

3. Doing a term paper.
   (1) Getting a subject.
   (2) Working up material—in class.
   (3) Working up material—outside reading.
   (4) Writing the paper—methods of saving time.
   (5) General comment on the value of term papers compared to examinations.

4. Life in a small town.
   (1) The character of the people.
   (2) Education in a small town.
   (3) The social life.
   (4) The changes of time.

5. The development of my chief interest.
   (1) How I acquired it.
   (2) How it grew.
   (3) Its advantages and disadvantages.

NOTE.—The foregoing divisions into paragraphs are in every case, of course, purely arbitrary. (See page 34.) The writer might factor again each subtopic: he might, for instance, in example (5) include in one paragraph (1) *how I acquired it* and (2) *how it grew*, and divide (3) *its advantages and disadvantages* into two or three or half a dozen, according to its complication.

The following is a summary, sentence by sentence, of the successive paragraphs of John Burroughs's "The Art of Seeing Things":

(1) Some people are only half alive to what is going on around them; others again are keenly alive. (2) We may see coarsely and vaguely, as most people do, or we may see finely and discriminately. (3) To find what you are not looking for, to have a detective eye that reads the faintest signs—that is to be an observer. (4) Sleight-of-hand succeeds only because it deceives the ordinary eye. (5) The observation of natural objects is difficult because the background tends to conceal rather than expose. (6)

I call a close observer, then, a man who notes the individual feature of tree and rock and beast and bird, and allows no subtle flavor of the night or day, of the place and the season, to escape him.

Could you, having knowledge of the subject, develop anything like the original from this outline? Make a similar summary of a paper you might write on one of the following:

1. Farm life in winter.
2. The differences between high school and college life.
3. Organizing a high school debate.
4. Scientific loafing.
5. Motor-cycling.
6. The organization of a lumber camp (or any of the subjects suggested on page 118).

SECTION VII.

Argumentation.

69. Argumentation Defined.—Argumentation is the kind of composition which seeks to *convince*. It is thus directly based on exposition. Before you can convince anyone, you must make him understand the situation; that is to say, before you can argue, you must explain.

Indeed, pure exposition is in its effect often the best kind of argument. You present the case clearly, and without further delay the reader will often come to the conclusion you wish him to reach.

But for purposes of analysis we must go further. Exposition *may not* have anything to do with the effort of convincing. You can explain the workings of the steam engine without a thought of attempting to prove anything to anyone. Your discussion of how to build a boat will not involve argument. Indeed, there are many subjects from which argument should be rigidly excluded, or upon which it could not be founded. A text-book does not often argue; the statement of a problem in geometry does not argue.

Argument, it will be noticed, is not possible until some statement has been made. You can explain, but you cannot argue, a term—"Tennis," for instance, or "Canada," or "Municipal Ownership," or "English Composition." But the moment a statement is made about this term, the possibility of argument begins. "Tennis is bad for girls"; "Canada does not favor reciprocity"; "Municipal Owner-

ship is a long step toward Socialism"; "English Composition is an art"—these are all theoretically arguable.

70. The Basis of Argument—Fact and Inference.—Argument is based upon two things: facts and inferences. Facts are concrete things, inferences are the conclusions drawn from them.

That George Washington is dead is a fact; that all men must die is an inference, drawn from many facts. That Cornell is almost always successful in her boat-races is a fact; that her coaching-system is admirable is an inference drawn by everyone interested. That Mr. Bryan advocated free-silver is a fact; that he subsequently declared himself to be mistaken is a fact; but that he *was* mistaken is an inference only. That women in most States do not vote is a fact; that they vote in Colorado is a fact; that they as a rule wish to vote, either there or elsewhere, is an inference.

Fact is a matter wholly of evidence. There may of course be denial of that which is stated as a fact. You say "Smith is six feet tall," and your friend says "He is only five feet eleven inches." That is called an *issue of fact*. One of you is demonstrably wrong. The evidence will show which.

71. Proof.—The combination of facts and inferences upon which you rest any assertion is called the proof of that assertion. It should be noted that, from one point of view, simple exposition may be the most effective kind of proof. A salesman shows his prospective customers what his typewriting machine or his dynamite can do; the customer makes his own inferences, and buys the goods. You are arguing that immigration should not be restricted. A dispassionate statement of the situation as it exists to-day, the character of the immigrants, the need of the country for workmen, may be your best method of

procedure. You wish to convince the authorities that the honor system in examinations should be adopted; an explanation of exactly what the honor system is may go far toward securing your end. At all events, never forget that without clear exposition no argument ever gets anywhere.

Technically, however, proof is the process by which you develop the truth of your statements. Complete proof is only theoretically obtainable. A mathematician can prove, in this complete sense, that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; the astronomer may be said to have proved that the earth revolves about the sun. But ordinarily proof is a comparative term. You advance so much evidence; so much, on the other hand, is advanced by those who do not agree with you; and the argument is temporarily won by him whose evidence is the more conclusive. Lincoln, according to an old story, once won a case in court on the evidence of thirty men and two horses, against the evidence of thirty-four men. The jury believed the evidence of the two horses to outweigh that of the four men.

Your evidence may bear directly or indirectly upon your main contention. Most of it will bear indirectly. In support of your main contention you present certain statements; in support of those, in turn, certain other statements; and so on. You shore up with evidence these supporting statements, and so make your main assertion firm.

72. The Kinds of Evidence.—Evidence is of two sorts, personal and circumstantial. Personal evidence is the testimony of persons; circumstantial evidence is the testimony of things. They may support or they may contradict each other. But they need to be considered separately.

73. Personal Evidence and Its Value.—Personal evidence, in a court of law, is the testimony of a witness. Its value depends on various factors.

(1) Is the witness of good character?

(2) Is he competent to testify in the particular case under discussion?

(3) Is he unprejudiced?

The Character of the Witness.—A man who has lied once is likely to lie again. Therefore the testimony of a witness whose character is not above reproach is less valuable, other things being equal, than the testimony of a witness of unblemished reputation.

The Competence of the Witness.—Powers of observation and powers of judgment differ widely in different persons. Testimony concerning an accident, from a person obviously short-sighted, would be weakened of its effect. The testimony of a grown man would have more weight than the testimony of a boy, because presumably the man's judgment would be sounder. The testimony of a botanist concerning the color of a flower would be given credence over the testimony of another person, because the botanist would be competent in his observation of flowers. On the other hand, when it came to identifying a horse, the botanist's testimony might be of much less value than a jockey's.

The Prejudice of the Witness.—Finally, the relation of the witness to the subject of his testimony is of vital importance. A wife in some courts may not testify against her husband, charged with murder, even though she saw the crime; because she is presumed to be so prejudiced in favor of her husband that she cannot tell the exact truth. A man who has spent his life teaching Greek classics to boys, may testify that the study of Greek does more for a boy than a study of geology; but the geologist

would reply that the testimony was of little value, for the teacher of Greek was prejudiced. A good man who owns a dog may testify that the dog is always kind and gentle, and yet be disbelieved. As soon as the element of *advantage to the witness* enters the case, the value of his testimony lessens.

On the other hand, the value of testimony increases if it is seen to be to the witnesses' disadvantage. If a manufacturer of safety razors testified that they were disagreeable to shave with, his word would probably be accepted. If a boy is accused of cheating in class, and another boy who is a member of the same fraternity says Yes, he saw the cheating going on, the testimony will probably be conclusive; unless indeed it could be shown that though in the same fraternity the two were personally at odds. If a careful writer on natural history states that animals reason, and subsequently declares he was wrong, that in five years of subsequent cautious experiment he has never found a case of obvious animal reasoning, his testimony will be thought very strong.

The value of any personal testimony, therefore, must be determined by these three tests in combination—(1) Is it honest? (2) Is it competent? (3) Is it unprejudiced?

But you are writing arguments; you are not in a court of law. How, then, are you affected? Obviously, your own personal testimony is seldom sufficient to prove whatever you assert. You may be honest and even competent, but you are not unprejudiced. Your assertions may have *some* weight; certainly, if the subject is one with which you are really competent to deal, you ought to present your own opinions. But the bulk of your personal evidence will be made up of the testimony of others. Where shall you seek this? Largely in print.

74. **The Evidence of Authority.**—The evidence of authority, *i. e.*, of those who have expressed themselves upon the statement under discussion, is only a branch of personal evidence. *It is subject to exactly the same tests for value.* Young writers forget this. They quote an anonymous newspaper editorial, a cheap magazine article, the book of a discredited and out-of-date historian, as complacently as if in so doing they were really offering proof. Is your authority honest? is he competent? is he unprejudiced? These are the questions which must be answered affirmatively if his evidence is to be of value. Nor is it sufficient that *you* know him to be all three. Your reader must be made to recognize the fact. A statement concerning the chronology of Shakespeare's plays, if it came from Sir Sidney Lee, should have weight. But if you cite Sir Sidney Lee, to an audience not well acquainted with literary criticism, you must tell who he is and why he is an authority, or your citation may fail of its effect. Even the vehicle which conveys the evidence of authority must be examined. You could not, for instance, safely cite any statement attributed to a scientific man by a daily newspaper.

75. **Circumstantial Evidence and Its Value.**—Persons testify, but things may testify also. A clean chin with a cut on it is good evidence that a man has recently shaved. If a shower of water falls on your head, and looking up you see in the third-story window a grinning boy with a bucket, you attribute your mishap to him. Circumstantial evidence is at the bottom of most if not all of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's admirable detective stories.

The value of circumstantial evidence increases rapidly as the number of circumstances all pointing to the same inference increases. If a window beside which you hap-

pen to be sitting is suddenly broken from without, and looking out you see a small boy running away, you have some ground for supposing that he broke your window. If, as he runs, you see him throw a stone at a window across the street, the probability that he broke *your* window increases immensely. If you catch him and find in his pocket three or four pieces of rock, of precisely the kind that came through your window, and if upon further examination you discover that no other rock of that peculiar sort is to be found anywhere near—you are likely to regard the evidence as conclusive. So in the experimentation of scientists. One experiment leads to a certain inference. But a dozen experiments of different sorts which all confirm the same theory are much more than twelve times as convincing. Sherlock Holmes, in "The Adventure of the Three Students," has to decide which of the three copied the questions of a printed examination from the preliminary proofs. A window through which the proofs could have been seen on a table is so high that only a tall man could have looked through it. Chips from a freshly sharpened lead pencil of a peculiar make and bits of clay of an unusual sort are found in the room with the scattered proofs. One of the students is over six feet in height; he is a broad-jumper, and the clay is of a kind to be found nowhere in that neighborhood except in the jumping pits; and a pencil of the kind to which the chips belonged is discovered in his room. The three pieces of evidence, taken together, are convincing.

Just as circumstantial evidence grows tremendously in value as it becomes cumulative, so it decreases in value when it is self-contradictory. After your window has been broken and you have seen the small boy outside throwing at another window, you suppose him to be the culprit. But, if when you have dragged him back by the ear, you

discover from the shape of the break in your window pane that it must have been made by a bullet, what conclusion shall you come to? If the broad-jumper had been a little man Sherlock Holmes would have been at fault. If among the scientists' dozen experiments a single one contradicts the other eleven, the evidence of the whole dozen is shaken.

76. The Relation of Personal Evidence and Circumstantial Evidence.—Personal evidence and circumstantial evidence may support or contradict one another. Your conclusion depends on the value you attach to each in any particular case. If, when you have caught your small boy, another boy appears and testifies that the one you have caught did not throw at your window, you pay little attention. But if your minister happens to be in the same street, and testifies also that this boy did not throw at your window, you let the captive go. Personal testimony from an honest and unprejudiced witness has outweighed strong circumstantial evidence. But suppose the boy turned out to be the minister's son, or you knew the minister to be extremely short-sighted; you might, then, believing him prejudiced or incompetent, still insist on turning the lad over your knee. The question upon every assertion resolves itself into the value of the proof you present. You must produce *proof which outweighs the proof upon the other side.*

77. The Processes of Logic.—Inference is a matter of the relation of facts to general truth. Inference, therefore, is based on logic.

Now underlying theoretical logic are two processes of reasoning. One is the process that follows experiment, the other the process that follows reflection. The one considers a succession of known facts, and draws from them a general conclusion. The other, having reached

a general conclusion, applies that conclusion to an unknown case.

For example: the baby handles snow, and chills his fingers. He handles it again, with the same result. He accordingly reaches the general conclusion that *all soft white stuff hurts his fingers*. He has experimented and come to this belief. That is the process of logic called *induction*. Now show him cotton-wool, and he will not touch it. Why? He applies his general conclusion, *all soft white stuff hurts his fingers*, to the unknown cotton-wool, and reasons that *this particular stuff will hurt his fingers*. That is the process called *deduction*. The two, it will be seen, go hand in hand. You cannot reach any general conclusion except from known particular instances; nor can you place any particular unknown instance except by testing it in accordance with some general conclusion.

78. The Basis of General Conclusions.—Such are the processes of logic. But the right or wrong of the conclusions you come to depend not on those processes themselves, but on your own accuracy in their employment. The *processes* are automatic; you are the important factor. The baby is wrong both in his general conclusion, *all soft white stuff hurts my fingers*, and in his application of it to the cotton-wool. Why is he wrong in his general conclusion? Because he has based it on insufficient data. Theoretically, we cannot reach any general conclusion until we have examined every particular instance. Theoretically, for instance, we cannot even say "All men are mortal," because we do not know that all men have died or will die. Practically, we do find it safe to come to this conclusion, and to all similar conclusions which have been preceded by a great deal of general experiment and knowledge of particular instances. That the earth is round, that fire burns, that water finds its own level, we assert as

truth. But that protection is advantageous to trade, that a college education is a good thing for most boys, that a taste for drink may be inherited—these assertions, although confidently made over and over again, are still uncertain, still awaiting really satisfactory proof. Whether we are convinced or unconvinced of their truth depends on what kind and amount of data we have secured to base them on.

79. The Application to Particular Instances. Syllogisms.—It is easy to err also in reasoning from some general conclusion to a particular instance. The typical form of this reasoning may be shown in what is called a syllogism.

All men must die (general conclusion).
You are a man (particular instance).
Therefore you must die (particular conclusion).

Or, to take the example just cited,

All soft white stuff hurts the fingers.
This is soft white stuff.
This will hurt the fingers.

The general conclusion is technically called the *major premise,* the particular instance is called the *minor premise.* Now your particular conclusion is wrong

(1) If the major premise is not true, or

(2) If the minor premise is not true, or

(3) If the relation between them is not exactly as stated.

The conclusion that *cotton-wool will hurt the fingers* is wrong, because the major premise that *all soft white stuff hurts the fingers* is wrong. Suppose the child to have learned specifically that *snow is cold.* Then he reasons:

Snow is cold.
This (the cotton-wool) is snow.
This is cold.

His conclusion is wrong again. He is right in his major premise, but wrong in his minor. Or suppose he reasons:

Most soft white stuff hurts the fingers.
This is soft white stuff.
This will hurt the fingers.

Once more he is wrong. His major premise may be assumed to be true; his minor premise is true also; but the relation between them is not exact. "*Most* soft white stuff" leaves a margin of some soft white stuff which does not hurt the fingers, and so makes the conclusion futile. A syllogism is accurate in its conclusion, then, only when both general conclusion and particular instance are correct, and when the general conclusion wholly covers the particular instance.

For many reasons an argument cannot successfully be carried on by syllogisms. But syllogisms furnish an admirable test of an argument. Somebody declares that So-and-so is hot-tempered; he must be, because he is an Italian. Reduce this to a syllogism.

All Italians are hot-tempered.
So-and-so is an Italian.
So-and-so is hot-tempered.

But the major premise, that all Italians are hot-tempered, will not hold; therefore the argument fails. Someone else says "The system of coaching at So-and-so must be poor, because the So-and-so crews are always beaten at Poughkeepsie." His argument is:

Defeat is the result of poor coaching.
So-and-so is always defeated.
So-and-so is poorly coached.

Again the major premise is inaccurate, and the argument will not hold.

80. Analogy.—A third form of reasoning, called *argument from analogy*, infers that *similar results will follow similar causes*. Observe: this is not to say that the *same* things will follow the *same* causes. That is induction. If you have suffered twice after eating cucumbers, you reason inductively that you will always suffer after eating cucumbers. But what about eating sweet pickles? You reason by analogy that as one pickle is like another, you had best not eat the sweet pickles either. Said Patrick Henry: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George the Third—may profit by their example." That is, reasoning by analogy, George the Third is conducting himself as Cæsar did, as Charles did; and a like fate may overtake him.

The accuracy of the argument from analogy depends on the extent of the likeness between the causes compared. The initiative and referendum have been used successfully in Switzerland: would they, therefore, be successful in the United States? Conditions in Switzerland and the United States are admittedly not the same; but how like are they? The force of the argument is measured by the amount of their likeness. The adoption of the "honor-system" in examinations has been advantageous at Princeton; are the conditions here sufficiently similar to those at Princeton to permit of the argument by analogy? Or again, the Civil War was brought about by a clash of industrial interests between North and South. Now we have a clash of industrial interests between East and West—shall we expect another Civil War? No, because the likeness of conditions is really very slight.

Argument from analogy, to be successful, therefore, must first establish the essential likeness of the things compared. Calling them alike is not sufficient; they must be proved to be so. Even then the argument does not go so

far as induction; it can never assert proof, but only probability.

81. Summary.—Argument, then, is carried on by assertions, based on fact and inference. The inferences may be by induction, by deduction, or by analogy. The effort of constructive argument is to collect facts in support of inferences, and to infer accurately from the facts collected. The effort of destructive argument is to disprove what is stated as fact, and to point out inaccuracies in inference. In all matters open to argument, complete demonstration is impossible; temporary conviction depends on the comparative strength of the case as presented by each side.

82. The Preparation of an Argument.—Let us consider now the actual preparation of an argument. In the first place, it is to be noted that all the statements made in chapter I of course hold good here. You cannot argue what you have not special knowledge of; you cannot argue effectively a large question in a small space.

83. Determining the Issue.—In the second place, no argument amounts to anything unless both sides agree on the points at issue. If you and I differ on the question whether Jones should be elected class president, and you insist that Jones is honest, while I am declaring that he has no tact, we make no progress in our argument. The issues are apparently, what qualities are required in a class president, and has Jones those qualities? If these are not the issues, we must agree on something else that is.

84. Definition of Terms.—The determination of the issues may depend upon the definition of the terms. Suppose an argument upon the question "Should the honor-system in examinations be introduced here?" There are "honor-systems" which require only the statement on the part of every student that he has neither given nor received assistance. There are also "honor-systems"

which require each student to report any case of dishonesty he may see. Until by definition you make clear the kind of "honor-system" you mean, you cannot proceed to any real argument. Again, it is declared that the study of Greek makes for culture. But what is culture? Yet again, style is declared to be innate; style cannot be taught. True, if by style is meant the literary expression of a personality; not true, if by style is meant the ability to write clearly and accurately. In conversation, this definition of terms often ends the argument; when a definition is agreed on, the talkers find they agree in their conclusions. In written argument, a fair and clear definition of any unknown or ambiguous terms is equally important.

85. The Introduction.—All this preliminary material is grouped in what is technically called the *Introduction* of an argument. The introduction may contain also the history of the origin of the case (if such a history is necessary) and your reasons for discussing the matter. Its function is to make plain just what is the question at issue.

86. The Body of the Argument.—Having then, in your Introduction, got at the real question, what is your process in arguing it out? What shall be the arrangement of your material? A sound argument consists of *a series of assertions logically supporting one another and each resting upon sufficient proof.* You say to your friend, "You ought to go to college. A college education would be of great value to you, and you can well afford it." That is not a sound argument; it is only the beginning of an argument. The statement "you ought to go to college" depends in part on the statement "a college education would be of great value to you." But on what does this latter statement depend? Let us say on two others: (1) "You mean to be a lawyer," (2) "a college education is of great value to a lawyer." Statement (1) probably needs no supporting statement and no proof. But statement (2)

needs both. A college education is of great value to a lawyer; why? Because every lawyer needs general cultural training; because only through a college education can this training be secured; because further, experience has shown that such an education is of great value. Nor can the argument stop here. The statement that every lawyer needs general cultural training requires proof; so does the statement that only through a college education can this general cultural training be secured. Bring on your evidence. On the other hand, the statement "you can well afford it" may require no further supporting statements and no further proof.

87. **The Process of Argument.**—What then is your right process in argumentation? *Decide upon what statements your original assertion rests. Decide in turn upon what statement each supporting statement rests. Prove by evidence every statement you make,* unless such proof is obviously not needed.

Let us represent such an analysis graphically.

YOU OUGHT TO GO TO COLLEGE.

(THE QUESTION AT ISSUE.)

I. A College Education would be of great value to you.
- (1) You mean to be a lawyer (no proof needed).
- (2) A college education is of great value to a lawyer.
  - **1¹.** Every lawyer needs general cultural training.
    - **1².** (Proof.)
  - **2¹.** Such general cultural education can be secured only through a college education.
    - **1².** It cannot be secured by a high-school education alone.
      - **1³.** (Proof.)
    - **2².** It cannot be secured by self-training.
      - **1³.** (Proof.)

(3) Experience has shown that such an education is of great value.

1^1. (Proof.)

NOTE.—Any consistent system of notation will serve to show the relation of point to point. Alternating letters and figures are possible for simple briefs.

I. Main head.
A. Subhead under I.
1. Subhead under A.
(*a*) Subhead under 1.

For any complicated analysis, however, the form shown in the text is best.

1. Main head.
1^1. Subhead under 1.
1^2. Subhead under 1^1.
1^3. Subhead under 1^2.

And so on indefinitely, the exponents indicating the number of steps away from the main head. In any system, care must be taken to keep the different points in right relation. Every *main head* will be 1, 2, 3, etc.; every subhead *directly supporting a main head* will be 1^1, 2^1, 3^1, etc.; every subhead two steps away from the main head will be 1^2, 2^2, 3^2; and so on.

1. .....
1^1. .....
2^1. .....
3^1. .....
1^2. .....
2^2. .....
1^3. .....
2^3. .....
3^3. .....
2. .....
1^1. .....
2^1. .....
1^2. .....
2^2. .....
3^1. .....
4^1. .....
1^2. .....
2^2. .....
1^3. .....

88. Refutation.—In every argument are two sides; what one asserts the other may deny. I say: "You ought to go to college, because you mean to be a lawyer, and a lawyer needs a college education." You reply: "A lawyer does not need a college education. At what college was Abraham Lincoln educated? The most successful lawyer in —— never saw the inside of a college." Now the chances are I shall have anticipated these statements, and am prepared to *refute* them. I reply: "Abraham Lincoln is not a fair example. Times have changed; were he growing up now, with his interests he would go to college. The —— lawyer you refer to is a mere money-making machine, and a bad citizen. And, moreover, I could recite you hundreds of cases of successful college-trained lawyers, as opposed to your two."

Now, thinking over the analysis of my argument beforehand, if I anticipate these objections, I shall wish to include my counter-statements somewhere in my analysis. Where?

I, 2. A college education is of great value to a lawyer.
  1^1. .....
  2^1. .....
3^1. That men not college-trained have succeeded in the profession does not disprove my point.
  1^2. Conditions in the past were different—as Lincoln's.
  2^2. Such men who succeed now are generally only money-makers—as the —— lawyer.

In other words, I put in where they belong *all the arguments against my contention,* as well as those in favor; and my analysis shows how I intend to meet them.

Sometimes all objections to an argument are left aside until the positive argument has been completed, and then taken up and refuted one by one. Neither way is necessarily better. If the objections are to leading statements

of the argument, they may well be left to be handled in a group at the end; if they are to details, they should be disposed of where they crop up. But an argument that does not consider them is no argument. Knocking down a straw man is not even good exercise.

89. The Form of a Brief.—Such an analysis as this the trained mind makes, even in conversation, instinctively, and unerringly follows out. The untrained mind finds many difficulties. But practice in actual writing down of such analyses is of great help. The form here given was suggested years ago by Professor Baker, of Harvard. It is technically called a *brief*, though it does not in any way resemble what lawyers call a brief, and should not be confused with that. Such an analysis as this, it should be noted,

(1) Is made up of *complete statements* only.

(2) Works *backward* from the main assertion to the statements upon which that assertion depends; then in turn to the statements upon which these depend; and so on till at every point a statement is reached which can be put as a fact. On these facts, and the evidence for them when evidence is needed, the argument ultimately rests.

NOTE.—It will be seen that every statement is phrased as a reason for some statement that precedes it. To test your form, therefore, *follow every head which has a subhead with the word* BECAUSE. If the brief, so read, makes sense, it is in correct form

1. You should go to college, because
   - 1^1. You mean to be a lawyer.
   - 2^1. A college education is of great value to a lawyer, because
     - 1^2. He needs a general cultural training.
     - 2^2. Such a training can be secured only through a college education, because
       - 1^3. It cannot be secured by a high-school course, etc.

This use of "because" is a test only, a kind of mathematical *proving* device; it has no virtue in itself.

(3) Does not make the writer think clearly; only tests his thinking, shows whether his thinking is clear or not.

(4) Cannot be made without definite knowledge of the question about which he is arguing. It is the last step before actually entering upon the argument.

90. The Conclusion.—An Introduction, it has been said, makes clear the question at issue, and is therefore essential to every argument. A Conclusion is by no means so essential. If the issues have been made clear and have been clearly argued, the case may safely be left to the judgment of the readers. A final paragraph or two, however, is often helpful, if directed to the right end. It should either summarize or directly endeavor to persuade. If a summary, it may either recapitulate the whole argument in brief or restate the main contention. Recapitulation is stiff, and likely to be wordy; simple restatement of the main contention is usually wise. If your conclusion attempts directly to persuade the reader, let it be brief and based on the arguments already presented. A conclusion which merely offers a new argument or two, as if they had been overlooked in the hurry of preparation, is worse than useless.

91. Persuasion.—Theoretically, persuasion is broader than argument; it includes argument, and adds to it a direct appeal to the reader's feelings. If you wish Jones to be elected class president, you say to your friend, "Here, Jones is a good man. Besides, you like me, and I want Jones elected—vote for him, won't you?" The last sentence is a direct appeal to the feelings. Henry Ward Beecher, speaking on slavery, in 1864, to an openly hostile audience at Liverpool, spent some time in a discussion of the English love of fair play. It had nothing to do with the issue; but it helped to get him a hearing for his arguments.

Practically, however, persuasion is so interwoven with argument as to be almost inseparable. Our feelings and our reason go usually hand in hand. Persuasion means really, therefore, getting your audience to take an interest in your argument. Having won their attention, you have half won your case. In writing or speaking to convince, therefore, study your audience. If you have made a brief beforehand, the obvious thing is merely to amplify your brief by the statement of your evidence. Such is the proper procedure in a purely technical or scientific matter. But if your argument is meant for any but technical experts, such a procedure is unwise. Follow the order of your brief, by all means, and if that is clear, so will your argument be clear. But think of the brief as being to the argument only what the ground plan is to the house, the scenario to the play. The brief is an exercise in thought, the argument is an effort at expression. Enliven it, make it personal. Tell a story to illustrate your point; use specific illustrations, specific words; do not disturb yourself by the fear that you may be writing narration or description. Know what your point is, and write to make that point, without regard to what form of composition a particular sentence may be. So you may fail, but you will surely fail, with a general audience, if you merely reproduce your brief minus the marks of notation.

Finally, as a matter of effective good taste, be courteous in your phrasing. "Such and such a thing is so"—"I have now proved that," etc.—"Any such statement is absurd"—phrases of this sort are disadvantageous. If you carry a big stick, you can afford to speak softly; if you doubt the weight of your weapon is not loud speech unsafe? Wisdom dies with few, but its growth shall be encouraged with fair words; you cannot drive it into your hearers like a stake.

Exercises.

Analyze the value of the evidence in the following cases:

1. A, following his election as senator, is charged with bribery. He is said to have paid one thousand dollars to B, a member of the legislature, for B's vote. B testifies that A paid him the money in ten 100-dollar bills in the presence of C and D, and that on the same day he (B) deposited the money in the bank. B is a poor man, of bad character.

C testifies that he was present when A and B met, and that A paid no money to B. C is a man of bad character, employed by A.

D testifies that he was present when A and B met, and that A paid B one thousand dollars in ten 100-dollar bills. D is a man of bad character, a close friend of B.

E, a bank clerk, testifies that on the day A and B met, B deposited one thousand dollars in his bank, in ten 100-dollar bills.

2. A, a girl in her senior year in high-school, is accused of cheating in her final examination in mathematics. The accusation is made by B, her teacher of mathematics, who testifies (1) that A has always been weak in mathematics, and was warned of her probable failure to pass, (2) that she sat next C, a very good student in mathematics, and the two spoke together twice, (3) that in A's paper the method of solving two problems was unusual and identical with C's method, (4) that when two days later in a private test A was given two similar problems to solve, she did them differently and incorrectly.

A testifies that she is innocent; that she studied beforehand with C; that they worked over the two identical problems given in the examination; that in the examination when she spoke to C it was to borrow a lead-pencil, and that she did not look at C's paper; that in the subsequent private test she was too nervous to do herself the least justice. A is a girl of high social standing, not a hard worker, but well liked by nearly everybody.

C testifies that she and A had worked out the night before the two identical problems given in the examination; that she gave A no assistance of any kind in the examination—that A

spoke to her twice to borrow a lead-pencil and once to complain of the heat. C is a hard student, but socially ambitious; she lives across the street from A.

D, who sat just behind A and C, testifies that he did not see A look at C's paper; that he heard A speak to C only once, and then to borrow a lead-pencil. D is an unusually fine student, highly thought of by everyone, near-sighted, and capable of great concentration.

A's mother testifies that A had worked with C three hours the night before the examination, and that A was so unnerved by the accusation of cheating that she could eat nothing for twenty-four hours.

3. A, a college sophomore, declares that immigration should be further restricted, on the ground that many criminals and people of weak health are now being allowed to enter the country. He cites as authority statements made by a professor of sociology who has for many years been opposed to unrestricted immigration; an anonymous article in a magazine; his personal experience in a two-day visit to Ellis Island, for the purpose of observation; two inspectors with whom he conversed; and the declaration of an official of a steamship company, a personal friend of A's, who says that the business of bringing in such immigrants is profitable to the company, but unpatriotic.

B denies that criminals and people of weak health are allowed to land, and cites the chief of inspection; a well-known woman philanthropist; the heads of four steamship companies, two German and two English; the report of the Secretary of the Interior; and two cases where to his own knowledge immigrants in weak health have been turned back.

Logic.—Induction leads us to a general conclusion; applying these general conclusions to particular instances, we reach particular conclusions. Among the following, which are the general conclusions, which are the particular conclusions? Suggest the sort of experimental process that precedes each general conclusion and formulate the particular conclusions in syllogisms.

Example: *Hornets sting.* (A general conclusion reached by individual experimentation.)

Look out!—that's a hornet and he'll sting you. (Two particular conclusions. Expressed as syllogisms they would run thus:

(*a*) { All insects of a certain form and color are hornets.
This is an insect of that form and color.
This is a hornet.

. . . . . .

(*b*) { All hornets sting.
This is a hornet.
This will sting.)

1. Girls learn more quickly than boys.
2. A bully is always a coward.
3. "That isn't an Indian." "Yes it is; look at his cheek-bones." "Yes, but don't you see that his hair is curly?"
4. I came of good stock. I expect to live to be ninety.
5. Football is dangerous.
6. A boy like you ought to play football.
7. I won't hire anyone who smokes cigarettes.
8. Fortune favors the brave.
9. What a soft voice he has, and what soft hands! Has he ever gone to public school?
10. Macaulay writes shorter sentences than any other well-known historian.

What is the logical process involved, and what is the defect, in each of the following conclusions:

1. If you walk under a ladder you will suffer misfortune within forty-eight hours. My aunt walked under one once, and that very day she burned her hand terribly. (General conclusion, reached by deductive reasoning from insufficient data.)
2. "These fine-talking men from the big towns mostly wear those false shirt-fronts; they wear a frill till it's all a mess, and then they hide it with a bib: I know Riley does." (George Eliot.)
3. "A spaniel, a woman and a walnut tree—
The more you beat 'em, the better they be."
4. Municipal ownership of street-railways has worked well in Glasgow, and should be adopted in New York City.

5. Let a boy leave a ten-dollar bill on his desk in his fraternity house; will any other boy in the chapter take it? No. If you *trust* boys you can be sure of their honesty; and so you will find it to be if you adopt the honor-system in examinations.

6. Stay at home, boys, if you want to get on. A rolling stone gathers no moss.

7. I don't think much of a college education. My father had none, and is a successful man. My uncle went to college, and my father supports him.

8. It is never safe to give to beggars. Anyone who will beg will lie. I have personally twice seen examples of this fact.

Write in outline the introduction to an argument on each of the following questions, giving the definition of each term as needed and stating what the issue is:

(Example. Should Smith be made class president?

1. The question is urgent, for (*a*) the election comes to-morrow, (*b*) the president really decides the value of the class, as an organization, to the college.

2. I agree that Smith is competent in many ways.

3. The issues are:

(*a*) Has he the qualities necessary to a successful class president?

(*b*) Is there no better man for the place?

(Note that, *so far, no one can tell on which side you mean to argue.* In other words, your Introduction is unprejudiced.))

1. Should an Inter-Class Baseball series be undertaken?

2. Was Hamlet justified in his treatment of Ophelia?

3. Should the study of public speaking be required in college? (Define the term.)

4. Should work in physical culture be required in college, and if so, how much? (Define the term.)

5. Should United States senators be elected by direct vote of the people?

6. Should the town you live in adopt the commission form of government? (Define the term.)

7. Was Lady Macbeth responsible for her husband's downfall? (Define *responsible.*)

8. Can our present method of teaching English Composition be changed for the better?

9. Can the average man work his way successfully through college? (Define your terms.)

Organize in brief form the following arguments:

1. You ought to learn to dance. You sat around like a ninny at the Prom. Of course if your parents objected I wouldn't say a word; or even if you didn't enjoy going out and seeing people, though to be sure if you didn't you ought to, and to learn to dance would be the surest way of growing to like going out. Dancing is cheap and pleasant amusement; people wonder at you if you *don't* dance; and the idea that it wastes time is nonsense. I got Φ B K because I knew enough to take a little recreation occasionally.

2. Dormitory life is all very well for the timid or the unsociable, but for a girl who is tempted to do too much, as I am, it is a failure. One comes to know many pleasant people, but at a terrible cost of time. The dormitory makes so many demands! It is no less expensive than living in a small boarding-house. Its nearness to the college is really a drawback, for you don't have to walk and so get no exercise. I tried it my freshman year, and enjoyed it tremendously, but I'm not here principally for enjoyment.

The teacher should dictate other examples of this sort of colloquial argument for analysis and organization.

SECTION VIII.

Narration.

92. What Narration Is.—Narration is the record of events, either real or imaginary. Pure narration is difficult to conceive of except in bits. "I went down town and bought a hat" may be called pure narration. But in every actual case, the events happen somewhere, and to somebody; thus *setting* and *characters* (which demand exposition and description) are essential. "One very hot day, when I was only five, I went down town and unassisted bought a hat" introduces both setting (*one very hot day*) and character (*when I was only five*).

93. The Object of Narration.—The object of narration is to stimulate the imagination to an interest in the events recorded. A precise understanding of these events must usually accompany the interest; but the interest is the prime matter. It makes no difference whether the events are real (as those of reminiscence or history) or fictitious (as those of the short story and the novel). The fundamental interest of the writer is the same in both cases, and success in one kind of narration usually implies ability to do well in the other. The trained newspaper man easily learns how to write a short story; the novelist can advise the historian upon the method of presenting historical material.

94. The Methods of Narration.—The basic method of narration is the statement of events in the order of their occurrence. But frequently the exact order it is unwise

or even impossible to maintain. Moreover, what events shall be included? No instant can pass without its incident. If I let my hand drop to my side, that is an incident. Tolstoi, in *War and Peace*, devotes three pages to chronicling the events of the time between the disappearance of the flame of a lighted fuse into a bomb and the explosion —perhaps a tenth of a second. Obviously, in no narration can everything that happens be included. For effective interest, however, as already pointed out, these events must be related to the people and places whom they concern. Your problems of narration, then, may be said to be as follows:

1. How shall you arrange your events?
2. What events shall you include?
3. How shall you bring in your characters?
4. How shall you bring in your setting?

95. The Order of Events.—The newspaper always gives first the outcome or résumé of a series of events. In the case of a fire, for example, your newspaper informs you in headlines and the first paragraph, what was burnt, who was hurt, and how much property was destroyed.

The plan is occasionally followed by other than newspaper writers; for example, the sentence just cited, "One very hot day, when I was only five, I went down town and unassisted bought a hat," is plainly such a résumé; we expect it to be followed by details which fill it out. The advantage of the plan is that it concentrates at once the attention of the reader. "I am the boy who fell three hundred feet from a captive balloon and wasn't hurt. Shall I tell you about it? Well then—" Such a statement leads one to immediate interest; the reader wishes to know how such a thing could be.

Beginning in the Middle.—You may begin neither with a statement of the outcome, nor at the beginning, but in

the middle. A certain rapidity, a certain emphasis, is often gained by this plan. Suppose you are giving a little account of your own history. You might begin: "Last year I went through a very curious experience, perhaps the most important of my life so far. I, who had always planned to be a lawyer, decided to become an engineer. I remember the night I came to my final conclusion. There I sat with my father's letter in front of me—my life to choose, as you might say—and stared at a corner of the ceiling. The janitor had been careless; there was a spider-web in that corner, and the light fell full on it. The chap who built that web was an engineer, if you please—or would you call him a lawyer, getting fat on his victims? And I finally decided.

"*But if you are to understand or care about my decision, you must know something about me. Well, then—I was born in Texas, May 4th,* 1889." And so on. Now it is plain that the events of paragraph one follow, chronologically, the events of paragraph two. They are deliberately put in this order for the sake of emphasis. The device is an easy one; it has the sanction of the poet Horace, with his *in medias res;* and it may sometimes well be adopted.

Order in Complicated Narration.—In a short narration, with only one character or group of characters, events may be recorded, if the author wishes, without any change from the chronological order. In any complicated narration, however, one which involves more than a simple set of characters, procedure is not so easy. Telling, for instance, the story of the Battle of Waterloo, you must include an account of Napoleon's actions before the actual onset; of Wellington's also, and of the struggle. You cannot write of Napoleon and Wellington simultaneously. You deal first with one, therefore, bringing his doings up

to the moment of meeting; then shift to the other, and recount the preliminary incidents which concern him, up to the same moment; and finally, having brought them together, go on with both. It is precisely as if you had two heavy stones to carry across a field and down the road. You bring one out to the fence and put it in the wheelbarrow; go back and bring out the other, and then march off triumphantly with both. If you had ten to carry instead of two, your plan would be the same.

96. Suspense.—In all cases, the order of your incidents is governed by the necessity of *suspense*. The reader of a narration wishes to know how it is coming out. His curiosity satisfied on this point, his interest lapses. But this suspense is twofold. He wishes to know (1) the outcome, (2) how the outcome is to be reached. His curiosity is not satisfied till he knows both. To state the outcome first, therefore, may merely increase his interest. How, he asks, can you reach that point? But the moment he sees clearly your road to it, he stops wondering. This is why an old story with a new ending, or an old ending (such as marriage) with new complications preceding it, may *both* be successful as narrations; why, on the other hand, the moment you have let your reader see, as he travels along with you, precisely the turn he is to take, you have lost him.

97. Selection of Incidents.—The second problem is, "What incidents shall you choose?" To say "choose only the significant," is good advice, but vague. What are the significant incidents?

In the first place, *those essential to the story*. These generally settle themselves. They are the fundamental events, without which there is no narration whatever. That you fell out of the boat, that you sank, that someone pulled you to shore—you could not give an account

of your recent adventure in the water without these or like details. That your hero was born, that he went to work, that he married and died—you could write no biography and omit these matters. Your difficulty of choice will not lie here, but in other matters.

98. **Developing Incidents.**—Developing incidents are those which clothe the narrative, which are intended to stimulate the imagination to its interest in the essential events. A barn is set on fire and burns to the ground. One child is severely hurt, another escapes injury. These are the essential events. But let us add that Harry Baker has taken his small brother to the barn, to witness the smoking of a fern-leaf cigarette; that the match, carelessly tossed away, smoulders in straw and then sets it alight; that the two boys are caught in the mow; that Harry lets his small brother down from a window by a rope; that he then crawls out himself; that the rope breaks and he drops, breaking his leg; that he manages to crawl to safety. The details *develop the story.* Now, of course, we may proceed to any length in such details. How the match came to find the straw; why the boys were so long in noticing the fire; how Harry found or made the rope; how he got the small brother out of the window; how the rope broke; how he managed to crawl away—these details and a hundred others we may add. What governs our choice?

99. **Inherent Interest of Events.**—For one thing, this: include only such developing incidents as are *in themselves interesting.* There may be a difference of opinion, of course, in any given case. You set out for the aviation field to see the flying. But as you are getting off the street car you trip and sprain your ankle, and have to be taken, ignominiously, home. Suppose in giving an account of this adventure you begin:

"I had never seen a monoplane in action. [When I

was twelve, however, I had tried to imitate Darius Green by flying, with the aid of my mother's silk umbrella, from the shed-roof. All I got by that was a cut knee and hard words from my mother; but ever since then I had taken a keen interest in aviation.] Last Wednesday afternoon, therefore, I set out to witness the Frenchmen 'conquer the air' at Grant Park." Now the sentences in brackets are not necessary; their justification, if any, is that they do not contradict the intention of the narration, and that they may be thought to have *inherent interest*. Your own judgment, as it grows by practice, must make the decision in each particular case.

100. Knowledge of the Intention of the Narration. —But the really important matter is specific knowledge of just what you are trying to tell. If your story is of the *burning of the barn*, you will put in details that particularly concern that; if your story is of Harry's exploit, you will reduce the number of incidents directly concerned with the fire, and include more which relate to Harry's deeds. This seems obvious. But when you have written of a fire-engine's race to a fire, have you never included details of how you happened to be there? When you have told the story of catching a two-pound bass, did you never begin by saying that "One day we boys decided to go fishing. So the next morning, about half-past five, we started out"? Observe the following narrative. What is the intention of the narrator? Did he know?

"The typical day in my life about which I am going to write is taken during the foot-ball season of last year. I was then a student in the Alton High School. Alton, by the way, is situated on the Mississippi River, five miles north of the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers.

"Because of the numerous taunts of my classmates, who repeatedly called me 'yellow,' I was determined to come out for foot-ball practice that night. I had never fancied foot-ball,

and my sole reason for wishing to appear for practice was to prove to the school that I was not 'yellow.'

"All through the day my thoughts were upon the foot-ball field, and the many deeds which I intended to perform in order to make the team. The day passed slowly; the only distinguishing feature being the fact that my grades were all extremely low. My bookkeeping and English remained untouched, for I could not concentrate my mind upon my studies.

"At last the long wished for signal of dismissal rang, and I made my way to the gymnasium dressing room.

"I was extremely nervous, for this one thought worried me: Shall I, through my ignorance of the game, make a miserable failure?

"When the thought of a possible failure came to my mind, it seemed to inspire me also with an almost fiendish determination to do my level best, and prove to the school that I was not 'yellow.'

"Amid the jests of the regular players, I donned my foot-ball suit, and reported to the coach. He immediately placed me at left end on the scrub team, and ordered a short signal practice, for the purpose of familiarizing me with the signals. Soon, however, he ordered the regular scrimmage, after telling me to remain at left end.

"I was thoroughly determined to distinguish myself now, for I realized that this was the crucial test, and meant either success or failure to me.

"So with this thought in my mind, I played my hardest and best, apparently unconscious of everything else but the man with the ball. My efforts were crowned with success, for after making several daring tackles, I drew the commendation of the coach.

"The ball was soon given to the regular team and line plunges ordered. After several successive gains, all of which were made through left guard, I determined to play in closer, so as to back him up.

"As I had fancied, the next play was a cross buck through left guard, but owing to my anticipation of this play, I was there to stop the half back, after he had emerged from a large hole made in our line by the opposing guard.

"The half back with head low, and almost doubled, dashed at full speed straight for me. At this moment the realization

that this was my one opportunity, for either success or failure, forced itself upon me.

"With this thought in my mind, I dived for his knees. He seemed to realize my intention though, for he ducked his head still lower, and ran directly toward me.

"As I had no time to dodge, his head struck me on my forehead, and I dropped to the ground unconscious.

"After being revived by copious showers of water, I continued playing. That night after practice, the coach took me aside and said: 'Come out every night this week, and I will put you in the game Saturday.'

"Saturday I was in my old position at left end, and continued to remain there throughout the season."

101. Climax.—This fundamental intention of the narration is often called *climax*. Climax in a narration means especially *the point of highest interest*, toward which all preceding events tend. The climax of the story of the adventure in a barn, just cited, would be the escape of the two boys. The climax in an account of the battle of Waterloo would be the retreat of Napoleon. The climax of Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" is Dravot's death. A narrative, whether of fact or fiction, almost always fails unless it has some such definite objective. Suppose you write of your experiences in vacation. You may chronicle day after day, you may include not a single striking event, and still be interesting; but only if your account possesses some definite objective—some success in which you have previously failed, some achievement gradually led up to—which, as the reader reviews your account, he sees to have been always the goal of your efforts. Writing a narration, telling a story, without this objective point is like playing a game without paying any attention to the score.

102. The Logic of Events.—This climax determined, that which governs the choice of incident is really to a

very great extent logic. The logic of narration is not precisely the logic of argument; but it is almost as essential. In a sound narrative, one incident does not merely *follow* another; one incident *causes* another. This relation is true of life itself. What you do to-day is the result of what you did yesterday, last week, ten years ago. Only in life this cause-and-effect relation of incident to incident is not always clear, not always noticeable. The art of narration is to *make* it clear. Napoleon retreated at Waterloo because the charge of the Old Guard failed, and because Grouchy failed to appear on time. The charge of the Old Guard failed because Napoleon, looking over the field, did not notice the sunken road of Ohain; Grouchy failed to appear because——

"For want of a nail," says the old story, "the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost; for want of a horse, the rider was lost; for want of a rider, the army was lost; for want of an army, the kingdom was lost—and all for the want of a horse-shoe nail!" The incidents here need development, perhaps; but the chain of causation is complete and admirably illustrative. In narratives of fact you select incidents, in narratives of fiction you invent incidents, which lead logically and step by step to the climax of your story.

103. The Introduction of Characters.—The third problem in narration was thus stated: *How shall you bring in your characters?* By "characters" here any person (or thing) is meant with whom the narration is concerned—yourself, Napoleon, a dog, or the creations of your imagination.

Presenting Characters at Beginning of Narrative.—Mr. Hilaire Belloc, in a recent History of the French Revolution, begins by explaining a half-dozen characters who are important to his narrative—Mirabeau, Danton, Robes-

pierre, and others. Having roused our interest in them and made them clear to us, he goes on to tell what they did. The device is always practicable, though seldom employed on so large a scale. A paragraph or two which presents the actors may precede any account of their doings.

"Roger and I drove out to see the road-races last week. Roger is tall, red-headed, and inclined to find nearly everything a bore. He owns a car, however, and is generous in inviting people to use it; and when it breaks down, instead of growing angry, he really begins to enjoy himself. He would much rather tinker with it, I believe, than drive it. I am just the other way; lighthearted and enthusiastic, fine company when all goes well, and ready for anything, but not very fond of Old Man Trouble."

Such a plan makes for clearness. Knowing what the actors are, the reader is quicker to comprehend what they do. All the important characters can be presented, or, if the narrative is a long one, as new characters are introduced in the progress of the narrative, they can each be sketched before they are brought into the action.

Characters Introduced During the Progress of Narrative.—The other plan is to set characters in action without special comment, and, as the incidents unroll, add whatever explanation or description is necessary. This is the commoner way.

"Shot at from behind three times in a month, and yesterday stabbed in the shoulder by an unseen assailant, Guiseppe Rossi knows what is meant by the 'vendetta.'

"*Rossi, who is a fruit-peddler, thirty-two years old, living at* 161 *Sedgwick Street,* was standing at the corner of Sedgwick and Oak Streets, last night about nine o'clock, *thinking about the price of bananas,* when he heard a rustle of footsteps behind him. Before he could turn, he says, he felt a stinging pain in

his shoulder, and a blow which upset him on his face. He staggered to his feet again, but no one was near him. *Rossi is unusually large for an Italian, and has something of a reputation as a fighter;* hence it is probable his assailant concluded discretion was the better part of valor, etc."

The italicized phrases dealing directly with character are brought in where needed.

104. Description and Exposition in Character Presentation.—Both description and exposition may be thus employed in the presentation of a character—the one to make the character seen, the other to make it understood. Running comment, of the sort spoken of in the preceding paragraph, should, however, whether it is expository or descriptive, usually be brief. A reader's just demand of a narration is that it should *keep going*, and extended discussion of characters interrupts and halts its progress. Say what you need to say about your people, but say it concisely.

105. Methods of Developing Characters.—What has just been stated concerns the introduction of characters to the narration. To develop those characters, besides straightforward exposition and narration, you may also employ *dialogue* and *narration* itself; that is to say, you may rouse us to interest and knowledge by telling us *what they say* and *what they do*. As for the last point, development of character by narration, it needs no special comment; if your intention in narration is to interest us in certain characters, as in biography and most fiction, you will, as suggested on page 151, choose your incident accordingly.

106. The Introduction of the Setting.—How shall you bring in your setting? That is the fourth problem of narration. The two plans are those suggested for the

introduction of character—at the beginning, and throughout the progress of the narrative.

Scene Presented at the Outset.—When a setting is either essential to the story, or very complicated, or both, it is often elaborated at the outset. So an account of a battle might begin with a description of the battlefield, an adventure in a balloon with a careful explanation of the balloon, or a mystery story with an account of the house in which the mystery was found. Balzac begins a famous short story—"La Grande Bretêche"—with page after page of description of an empty and desolate house, in which, years before, the tragedy took place of which he means to tell. J. M. Barrie, as a kind of preface to his little stories of Scotch life, gives an elaborate picture of the village of Thrums, in which they occur. It should be noted, however, that a long preliminary account of a setting presupposes a long narrative. Balzac's three pages of description are followed by eighteen of narration; and even so, most readers wish he had shortened the initial presentation of his scene.

Scene Presented in Progress of Narration.—This again, as in the presentation of character, is the more common plan. A line or two here and there as needed to make the action understood—that is the most satisfactory way. Again, it should be observed that *brevity in such presentation is desirable.* The story must march, whether it be an account of how you climbed a hill or walked in a procession, or the tale of *Vanity Fair.* Over solid chunks of exposition and description it cannot march easily: it stumbles. Be clear in your account of the surroundings of a narration, but be as brief as is consistent with clearness.

107. "Setting" is not "Landscape."—Finally, do not confuse the setting of a story with landscape description,

"scene" with "scenery." Just because few things are easier than to write down details of field and wood and sky, the young writer indulges himself in doing so, and charges up the cost to "setting." He is wrong. "No man," said R. L. Stevenson, "ever spoke of scenery for above two minutes at a time," and no man ever read a page of so-called "description of a landscape" without impatience. "Setting" is the stage of your narration—the *necessary* topographical details, the *necessary* heat and cold, the *necessary* color, sound, and smell. "Scenery" is description for its own sake, for ornament. A skilful narrator may employ it, may even gain by its employment. To the unskilful it is fatal.

108. The Language of Narration.—Narration, appealing as it does to the imagination and the feelings, and dealing as it does with events, must move more rapidly than exposition and argument. Paragraphs and sentences in good narration are usually somewhat shorter than in exposition and argument, and verbs, the only words of movement, are of great importance.

A long paragraph promises slow progress and so deters the reader. As the order of narration is chronological, and a paragraph may properly be made wherever an incident begins or changes, the process of paragraphing is less difficult than in any other form of composition. The advantage of comparatively short sentences is obvious. The long sentence gathers a group of ideas together; the short sentence presents one after another, and is, therefore, particularly suited to the handling of successive incidents. It should be noted, however, that monotony of sentence-length and form is as depressing in narration as anywhere.

Incident is action; and verbs, which alone express action, are, therefore, obviously of importance in setting

forth incident. The active voice, moreover, is better suited to narration than the passive. "Ten fish were caught. Our rods were then stowed in a safe place, and the journey home was resumed," is less effective than "We caught ten fish, stowed away our rods in a safe place, and turned again toward home."

109. Dialogue.—Other forms of composition besides narration may be carried on or assisted by dialogue, as, for instance, argumentation as in Plato's *Dialogues*, or exposition in Miss Edgeworth's *Harry and Lucy*. But dialogue in narration occupies a peculiarly important place. It serves two main functions—to advance the story and to exhibit the characters. Ideal dialogue does both at once.

"I've come back," he repeated, "and I was the king in Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan—and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet, which were wrapped in rags. "True as Gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whisky," I said, "and take your own time. . . . You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a head priest, and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I will be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. . . . We left with that caravan, me and Dravot, playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners and—what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed, fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.—KIPLING. *The Man Who Would Be King.*

This carries forward the record of events, and at the same time shows plainly in what sort of condition Carnehan has returned. Dialogue may, of course, be used as the sole medium of narration; but only, as a rule, when the author's interest in his characters is greater than his interest in the events through which they pass. Its advantage is obviously in its dramatic quality. The speech *of* a character is more personal and, therefore, more vivid than statements *about* a character.

110. The Composition of Dialogue.—Speech, to be effective, must be in harmony with the character who utters it. It helps to form the reader's conception of the character, and it must never contradict that conception. George Washington must talk like George Washington, a schoolboy must talk like a schoolboy, a fairy like a fairy. Perhaps the best biography ever written is Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*. Hundreds of Johnson's speeches forward the narrative; not one but is phrased absolutely in harmony with the rest. Kipling's Mulvaney talks through twenty stories, and never uses a word or a phrase that does not seem precisely his own. Johnson's speeches are authentic, Mulvaney's all invented, but the quality of harmony exists equally in both.

Certain principles may be said to underlie all dialogue. It is in short sentences, because spoken sentences are likely to be short. It dispenses with connectives and explanatory phrases, because in speeches we supply their places by the inflections of the voice. But the only way to be certain of writing effective dialogue, whether in historical or fictitious narration, is to be possessed of both a clear and exact conception of the character who is being made to speak, and a definite knowledge of how characters of his age, education, and training do habitually express themselves. Both are necessary. Readers still laugh at Charlotte Brontë for making Lady Blanche in *Jane Eyre*

say to a footman, before a roomful of people, "Cease that chatter, blockhead! and do my bidding!" Miss Brontë knew what sort of person she meant Lady Blanche to be, but she did not know how persons of that sort habitually express themselves. On the other hand, you may know very well how the average schoolboy talks, but unless you have an exact conception of the differences between the Tom Smith of your story and the average schoolboy, you will not be able to make Tom talk effectively.

111. How to Introduce Dialogue.—The simplest way is by prefacing each speech with *he said, she said, Tom said, said Arthur.* But this grows very monotonous. A variation is to use a verb which expresses the tone or manner of the speech—*he exclaimed, he blurted out, he whispered, she stormed, she declared, she insisted, she wailed.* Perhaps the best way, at least with only two speakers, is to let most of the speeches stand without introduction or comment.

"Are you going?" she asked.
"Yes."
"You told me you didn't like them."
"I don't," he replied truthfully, "but I can't get out of going all the same."
"Why can't you?"
"I promised Ned I would."
"Ned! You mean you promised Sue."
"I haven't seen Sue for weeks."
But she shook her head in unbelief.

Of course in any employment of dialogue the strictest adherence is necessary to the rules for paragraphing and the use of marks of quotation.

112. The Short Story.—Everything said of narration so far, applies equally to historical and to fictitious narration. Any elaborate discussion of fictitious narration

would be out of place here. But one or two points may be noted.

113. Form of the Short Story.—The ordinary short story may be likened to a steeple-chase. It begins at a definite point, and ends at a point equally definite, and previously determined, and between these two points are certain obstacles that the characters must be got over.

Effectiveness in a short story depends on the variety of those obstacles and the skill with which they are surmounted, or on the reader's interest in the characters, or on both. You see a jockey riding, and if he must take big jumps and takes them well he interests you; you see a friend riding, and even though the jumps be small you watch him eagerly. So in a story; if the obstacles, technically called situations, are various and skilfully got by, you will forgive some dulness in the characters; or, on the other hand, if you have been made to know and delight in the characters, you will follow them through scenes of a less striking nature.

114. "Situation" in the Story.—The obstacles, as has just been said, are technically called situations. "Plot" is a series of situations leading up to a climax. To illustrate it crudely: Baron Munchausen is chased by a lion. That is the first situation. He runs for the river, and as he is about to plunge in, is confronted by a crocodile. That is the second situation. He crouches; the lion leaps over him and into the jaws of the crocodile, and they destroy one another. That is the climax. Such situations may of course be developed to whatever extent the author thinks best. But without power to invent fresh situations, no one can write interesting stories.

115. The Relation of Situation to Climax.—The situations must not only be interesting; they must develop logically. The reader's demand is twofold—that the

way out of each situation and up to the next should be *unexpected*, and yet *inevitable*. His exclamation must be "I didn't see before; but I see now!" This interweaving of unexpectedness and inevitability is what we call suspense; and it is gratified suspense that keeps alight the fire of interest in narration.

116. The Relation of Situation to Character.—Situations must not only be logical in their relation to climax, but also logical in their relation to character. A good story hinges the outcome of its situations on the characters concerned in them. You and I are not alike; put in the same situation, we shall act differently, and so bring about different further situations.

117. Character in the Short Story.—The question to be determined first, then, is, whose story shall this be? If it concerns a boy and a girl, chiefly from whose point of view shall it be told? A child of ten has stolen half a dollar from his father's bureau, and the father, unseen, has been a witness. The father himself is fighting the temptation to make way with a large sum from the bank in which he is employed. Who shall be the chief character in the story as you tell it? Carnehan is the narrator of Kipling's story, *The Man Who Would Be King*. Suppose Kipling had chosen that Dravot should be the one to return—what effect would his choice have had upon the development of the situations in the story?

118. Presentation of Character.—Because one character is dominant, the rest do not become insignificant. The problem is with all characters—how to make them vital. They may be described and explained by the author, and some such explanation is usually necessary, but properly *brief*. They may be discussed by other characters in the story, a device of which all novelists are fond. They may reveal themselves in speech; and finally,

and most important, they may reveal themselves in action. It is by their deeds that we really know them. And this brings us back to the requirement of *situation* as the most essential single element of the successful short story.

Exercises.

Write, following the strict chronological order, a brief account suggested by one of the following:

1. Getting a job in vacation.
2. Learning how to camp.
3. My first entrance into society.
4. The day I was afraid.
5. My introduction to chemistry.
6. How I won my athletic emblem.
7. Just an ordinary day of my life.
8. An experiment in physics.
9. Getting interested in manual training.
10. How I was drowned.

Write a long paragraph on a subject suggested by one of the following. Give the outcome first, then the details:

1. An automobile accident.
2. Last Saturday's game.
3. The class-president is expelled for hazing.
4. Buying a motor-cycle.
5. Pledging day.
6. Finding a place to live in.
7. He didn't know it was loaded.
8. Losing the baby.

Write an account suggested by one of the following, trying particularly to keep the order of events clear:

1. The battle of the Cowpens.
2. Starting a school paper.
3. The day of a football manager.
4. Sherman's march to the sea.
5. The glee-club trip.
6. The big game.
7. The regatta.
8. At Valley Forge.

Selecting a subject suggested by one of the following, write out a brief clear statement of (1) what you intend your narration to be about, (2) what its climax is to be, (3) the incidents which are to lead to the climax:

1. One day last year.
2. Fishing.
3. An automobile adventure.
4. Mountain-climbing.
5. Falling in love.
6. An historical incident.
7. Winning a race.
8. My autobiography.

Write out a number of three- or four-line sketches of characters to be introduced at the beginning of the following short narrations:

1. My first fight.
2. Sailing with Jane.
3. Going to the Prom.
4. Electing a football captain.
5. Harry makes good.
6. A little story about Lincoln.
7. The first day in camp.
8. Sister goes to the matinée.
9. My great recitation.

Write a narrative on one of the following subjects, introducing the character during the progress of the narration:

1. How I came to know my chum
2. Lee's surrender to Grant.
3. When I was elected.
4. Fishing from the bridge.
5. The ghost.
6. The winning touchdown.
7. Robin Hood at Ashby.
8. My first experience in housekeeping.

Write a brief dialogue in accordance with one of the following suggestions:

1. One girl persuades another to run for an office.
2. The coach and the captain decide who shall play quarterback.
3. The instructor finally gets the right answer from a boy who "knows but can't express it."
4. The athlete explains to a young woman, sensible but ignorant of baseball, what happens in the first half-inning.
5. A boy talks over with his father the question of joining a fraternity.
6. The newspaper reporter interviews the new mayor.

The following situations might begin and end short stories. How would you develop them, and what situations can you devise to carry on the interest between?

1. A famous runner is warned that his heart is weak, and stops running. . . . Two years later by a wild dash for a doctor he saves a child's life and discovers that his heart is sound again.
2. The day before Christmas a transcontinental train, on account of a hot-box, stops at a lonely siding in the desert. A little girl gets off to pick flowers and is left behind. . . . Christmas day she is returned to safety by an outlaw, who has made her believe he is Santa Claus. He is shot while trying to make his escape again.
3. The half-back on his way to the game is delayed by helping out a deaf old lady who has lost her way. . . . She turns out to be the rich aunt of the coach.

4. A successful lawyer goes back home, after ten years' absence, to find his white-haired and saintly mother determined on a separation from his father. The lawyer is horrified. . . . After three days his father's quiet, well-behaved, implacable selfishness so works upon the son that he no longer opposes the separation.

Whose stories are each of the preceding? Tell the second from the point of view of the little girl; from the point of the outlaw. Tell the fourth from the point of view of the son; the mother. Why could it not be satisfactorily told from the father's point of view?

SECTION IX.

Description.

119. What Description Is.—If you look at a picture, or listen to a song, or sniff a perfume, your mind may be working in either of two ways. It may be endeavoring to discover the meaning of the picture, the structure of the song, the identity of the perfume; or, on the other hand, it may only be registering a series of sense-impressions, pleasant or unpleasant, which in turn may stimulate the memory or the imagination to action. Now, in writing, the effort to set the mind at work in the first of these ways, to make it *comprehend,* is called, as we have seen, *Exposition;* the effort to set the mind at work in the second way, to make it *feel,* is called *Description.* The real difference between exposition and description, then, is in what they are trying to accomplish.

It is true that any writing dealing with *individual objects* is often called description, and exposition is limited to writing which deals with *qualities,* or with *objects considered only as a member of a class.* (See page 110.) Thus, for example, if you were writing of robins, and put in details which were true of all robins, or of robins in general, you would be writing exposition; but if you confined yourself to such details as were characteristic of only *one particular robin* of your acquaintance, your work would be description. In this sense the following account of a Greek vase is description:

ATHENA AND HERAKLES CONDUCTING CHARIOT.

In the background three Doric columns, standing for a temple. Before it chariot driven by Athena, who holds goad and

reins, wears helmet, ægis, chiton, and himation, and steps with one foot into the chariot. Of the two horses, four hindlegs and three forelegs are visible; one turns his face to the spectator. Beside (beyond) the horses walk two figures, a bearded man clad in a long white chiton, whose mouth is open, and a man of whom there only remain the legs and the top of the head; facing the horses, between them, is a warrior wearing greaves and white cuirass, sword girt round him, his head hidden by near horse. Beyond the chariot of Athena is a horse, his nose enclosed with straps, one foreleg visible. Beside (in front) the chariot is Herakles, moving to right, clad in chiton and lion's skin, quiver at shoulder and sword at waist, who turns round and holds with both hands bridle of horse who comes in from the left.

But fundamentally descriptive, in any sense that fits our feelings, such an account is not. It *explains* the vase; it does not rouse our senses to appreciation. Compare it with Keats's lines, *On a Grecian Urn:*

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all,
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

This is true description addressed to the *feelings*. The exact vase of Keats's imagination has never been identified, but thousands have seen it vivid in their imagination. The first passage makes you try to construct the vase in your mind; the second merely rouses certain sensations, not necessarily in any logical sequence—memories, hopes, sounds, visions. The attitude of your mind, as you read one passage and then the other, inevitably changes.

This fundamental fact anyone who really wishes to write description must remember. Suppose someone asks you to tell him what your own room is like. Your first impulse is to give its size, and name the articles in it as if you were cataloguing them for collections in a museum. This is all very well, if you are writing to your mother, or some friend who wishes to understand just what are the conditions of your abiding place; but it is not effective description.

"My room is small, but sunny, looking south and west over the Plaisance. I have a few pictures, a few cushions; plenty of furniture, more than plenty of books (I don't know where to put them); on the east wall, against the background of the green cartridge paper, my plaster replica of the sophisticated Venus of the Louvre. Do you remember when we saw her together and I bought my copy? And I have a window seat, green also, from which

I can see the bustle of the rich (in chaises) and the poor (on foot) to and from the park. I wish I might see you among them!" This, in the true sense, is an attempt at *description.*

120. Getting the Descriptive Effect.—How is this descriptive effect, this appeal to the mind by a series of images rather than by the process called thought, secured? Let us examine.

In great part, the interest of description is in that which is appreciable by the senses—in sounds, tastes, odors, colors, shapes, sizes, textures, heat, cold, movement. Movement, of all these, is perhaps the most important in fixing the reader's attention. In the world of sight, what always catches the eye? Movement. A bird stirs in a tree, a fish jumps in a placid lake, a color changes in the sky—and we see them. So by a somewhat loose analogy movement in description may be said to catch the imagination and lead it where the writer wishes.

121. Description not "Word-Painting."—This important fact is often blurred in the writer's mind because he has been told that description is word-*painting.* Few terms could be more misleading. Painting is static; it has *no* motion. Words *move on* constantly; ideas must follow one another, they cannot proceed simultaneously. Moreover, painting appeals to the mind through the eye only; description appeals through every sense. Not a large proportion of people are "visual-minded," as the psychologists call it. Many of us have no power at all to "see" things in our brain. With many, really vivid sensations are roused only by sounds, smells, tastes. Here are three details descriptive of a woman:

"Her face was like old ivory, but finely wrinkled; her voice was very thin but clear, as if a little bell were ringing far away; a faint fragrance, an old-fashioned fragrance, of orris-root perhaps, or marjoram, hung about her."

Which of the three is by you most easily realized?

"I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odors of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget."—JOSEPH CONRAD.

Very little of this is addressed to the eye. Heat, weariness, a sudden fragrance—the eye has nothing to do with them. Good description is not painting, then; it deals with what painting cannot handle.

122. Specification in Description.—Anything that *stirs the imagination* may find a place in description. But what stirs the imagination? Specific details, always. By the word "vegetable" few of us are inspired to any vision or feeling. But "cabbage," "tomato," "pumpkin," set definite images before us, compounded of size, shape, color, taste, and smell. These images are the result not of the words only, but of the fact that our memories are always of specific things, and the memory is roused to activity, therefore, only by specific mention. We recollect not the quality of "goodness" of a friend, but *specific examples* of his goodness—kindnesses he performed; or specific outward evidence of his goodness—his clear eye, his sympathetic laughter, the tone of his voice. And our imagination, because it is really only another form of our memory, is also, therefore, stimulated only by the mention of such specific things.

Observe: it is not the thing itself, but our associations with it that are of importance to our imagination. Describe a girl as having red cheeks and white teeth; you

produce a not disagreeable impression on your readers But suppose you describe her, as a Malay girl once described an Englishwoman, as having "teeth white like a dog's, and cheeks as red as the cabbage-flower," and what is your effect? Just the reverse of agreeable, although the two details, red cheeks, white teeth, remain as they were. The unpleasant associations connected with *dog* and *cabbage* have wiped out the pleasant associations of *red* and *white*. Charles Lamb, in his essay "On the Danger of Confounding Moral with Physical Deformity," gives the two following descriptions of the same man:

(1) "He has a stoop in his gait, coarse red hair, nose short and cocked up, little gray eyes, and a pot-belly; speaks with a thick disagreeable voice; had on when he went away a greasy shag great-coat with rusty yellow buttons."

(2) "Leans a little forward in his walk; his hair thick and inclining to auburn; his nose of the middle size, a little turned up; lively hazel eyes; inclines to be corpulent; his voice not clear; had on a shag great-coat with yellow buttons."

Compare the two and see how in the second, by using words with pleasanter associations to most of us, Lamb has succeeded, without altering a fact, in changing our whole impression of the man.

Description in its fullest sense, therefore, is an appeal to the imagination of the reader through his memory—memory of what he has seen, heard, felt, read, and experienced. It gains its end by pointing out specifically distinguishing characteristics of whatever its subject may be. If your desire is to make me understand the appearance of, say, an ordinary bull-dog, you will set forth the general features of the animal—square muzzle, heavy shoulders, short hair, and so on. But if you wish to describe to me *your* dog—*i. e.*, to make me realize that one

animal as an individual thing—you will take for granted all the general bull-dog features, and concentrate upon the peculiar matters—odd markings, one ear partly gone, a limp in the left front foot, a shallow back—that distinguish him from all other bull-dogs. And just so far as the peculiar details you hit upon appeal to my imagination, rouse in my mind images, just so far you will have succeeded in being descriptive.

123. Organization of Descriptive Writing.—The absolute essential of sound exposition or argument is clear thinking. No such prerequisite exists to good description; one great reason perhaps why young people, averse to the effort of thought, "like to write descriptions"; one reason, too, why children should be encouraged to write them. The definite division, the obvious organization of expository work is even to some extent out of place in description. Yet description has an organization of its own; and no large effect can be secured without adherence to it.

124. The Point of View.—In the first place, one who writes description must have *a point of view;* and if the point of view is changed, definite notice of the change must be given to the reader. Describing what you hear and see from a mountain-top, you may not include the anemones of the distant forest, nor the chirping of the birds above them. This is obvious. But your point of view may be emotional, not topographical. If you dislike a girl of your acquaintance you will so describe her, even while sticking to the truth in details, as to give an unpleasant impression. A month later, when you have come to like her immensely, you will describe her in terms far more agreeable. Your first point of view will have been *dislike;* your second *liking.* Tennyson, in his poem *Mariana,* describes her home as she saw it, from the point of view of gloom, despair, and desolation:

"Upon the middle of the night
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;
The cock sung out an hour ere light;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her; without hope of change
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange. . . .

"About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark;
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding grey . . .

"All day within the dreamy house
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked
Or from the crevice peered about. . . ."

Now suppose one writes:

"She waked now and then, heard for a moment the comfortable crowing of a distant rooster and the sound of cattle stirring in the fields near by, then slept again until the breeze brought in the soft gray day. She rose and looked from her window. She saw a dark pool, edged with little mosses, and shaded by a single silver poplar, waving and whispering; beyond, the gentle level fields. The house was very quiet. A door rattled at intervals; a fly hummed gayly at the window; once a mouse rustled behind the wainscot, and then, stealing out, stared at her with its bright eyes."

The point of view here is *peace;* and the same scene is rendered, therefore, in quite another tone. It will be seen that this emotional point of view is behind such de-

scriptions as those quoted from Lamb (page 173), and what it does is to *determine the choice of the writer's material.*

125. Narration and Description.—The point of view determined, how shall the details of the description be put together? One highly useful plan is to *make use of narration.* This may be done in two ways. You who write may pass on, describing as you go; or that which you describe may pass by you. You walk down to the lake, and stand upon the shore.

"The park was crowded, mostly it seemed with children. The grass was very green, the lilacs very sweet. May is a pleasant month. As I crossed the bridge, the row-boats scooted under like water-spiders; away south I had a glimpse of the golf-links, and, between us, the island where the ninth hole used to be (I have played it, with two friends, at three-forty in the morning). Beyond the bridge, past the squatty little life-saving station, past the ginger-bread German building—dodge a big red car with a superior negro at the wheel, cross thirty feet of cobble stones, and here is the blue-striped lake!"

So far the movement is of the writer. In the next paragraph it is of the things described.

"Away out yonder is the crib, a rusty black spot. The sun glimmers on something beside it—the wing of a gull? Not possible; too far away. Is anybody sailing so early in the year? The glimmer grows to a white gleam. Here she comes, a speck, a patch, a boat finally, lifting in over the choppy rustling waves. A catboat—a catboat on Lake Michigan! The sun yellow above her, the water under her blue-and-green, and green-and-blue streaked as the wind strikes it and the sand-bars lie—no wonder she dances as she comes! If she were mine—if I were on her now!"

In one sense, as said, these paragraphs are narrative. But their movement is really only the almost essential

onward movement of all language; and their effort is truly to describe, not to tell a story.

126. Topographical Organization.—It is, of course, obvious that description, dealing as so many of its details do, with material objects, can often be organized topographically. Anything seen can be presented in a spatial order. A man can be described from head to foot—hair, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, shoulders, waist, legs, feet; a picture from back to front—background, middle distances, foreground—and from right to left—right background, left background, etc.; a house by roof, walls, doors, windows. Often the plan is a good one, often it is not. It is not a good plan if the emotional point of view conflicts seriously with it, or if the device of narration conflicts. It is a good plan when something large, with many details, is to be presented. Often in such a case it is best to give various details in some definite topographical order, either preceding them or following them with a treatment of the general impression made, *as a whole*, by that which is described. Note the following:

"She stood at the head of a deep green *valley, carved from out the mountains in a perfect oval, with a fence of sheer rock standing round it, eighty feet or a hundred high; from whose brink black wooded hills swept up to the sky-line.* By her side a little river glided out from underground with a soft dark babble, unawares of daylight; then, growing brighter, lapsed away, and fell into the valley. There, as it ran down the meadow, alders stood on either marge, and grass was blading out upon it, and yellow tufts of rushes gathered, looking at the hurry. But further down, on either bank, were covered houses, built of stone, square and roughly cornered, set as if the brook were meant to be the street between them. Only one room high they were, and not placed opposite each other, but in and out, as skittles are; only that the first of all, which proved to be the captain's, was a sort of double house, or rather two houses joined together by a plank-bridge over the river."—BLACKMORE, *Lorna Doone.*

This *fundamental image*, as it has been called, unites the various details into a whole and makes for clearness.

127. The Language of Description.—When the importance to description of specific detail was pointed out, the inference was plain that specific words must be used. But it is further true that description depends for much of its effectiveness on the use of *few words, and rapid sentences*. Conciseness is essential in all forms of composition. But in exposition and argument, where we are dealing with ideas, something will be forgiven if we grow wordy, because we are striving to make matters perfectly clear. In description, nothing like wordiness will be forgiven, because, though we must be clear, we must first of all be interesting. Our whole appeal being to the imagination, stimulation must be the watchword. *Many details, but few words, carefully related,* in presenting each detail, are necessary.

First to go should be adjectives and adverbs. A terribly bad habit of young writers is to supply one adjective with every noun, one adverb with every verb. Even a worse habit is to pile up adjectives or adverbs. "A heavy wind blew strongly through the tossing trees," writes Jones complacently. What he means is "A wind tossed the trees about." Make every adjective and adverb prove its right to be there. You can do this in a very simple way—see if you can so change the sentence as to keep your whole meaning without using the adjectives and adverbs. This will require the most careful selection of nouns and verbs; and to this careful selection is precisely what the writer of effective description always comes.

But do not be misled by this advice, or by reading the magazines, into coining nouns and verbs for yourself, or even into using very strange and striking ones. Such phrases as "The bear whoo-whooshed gruntingly along the

path," or "He slithered down the bank and stumped rapidly away," may catch the eye of an occasional editor, but they have on people in general the effect of a yellow waistcoat covered with red stars. They stimulate the imagination, but at the expense of the writer's reputation.

128. Summary.—Finally, then, when you wish to describe (1) appeal to the imagination through the memory by the use of specific detail, (2) stick to a point of view, or give your reader notice when you change it, (3) do not shrink from employing narration to help out your description, (4) order your details topographically if you can find no better way, (5) use as few words as possible in presenting each detail, and those chiefly nouns and verbs. And let your description be short. The imagination, except when exercised upon events, is easily wearied.

Exercises.

The details suggested below would, if given, serve to make a reader *understand* what is presented. Select and specify, in short descriptions that will make the reader *feel*. *Have a definite point of view.*

1. The library:
Door—height, shape, sound.
Windows—height, shape, position, color.
Furniture—shape, position, color.
Books—position, color, size.
Readers—number, attitude, costume.
General—rustling paper, waving pencils, breathing, sunlight, freshman, graduate, bad air, temperature.

2. A street crowd:
The place—narrow, high buildings, gray sky, mud, street-cars, pigeons, fruit-stands, smoke, wagons.
The people—color, movement, noise; individuals—peddlers, Scotch banker, a man with a green cane, eight hundred clerks.

woman with three babies, motormen, young girls, actresses, newspaper boys.

General—noise, of cars, pigeons, footfalls, wind, street-cries, whistles, color of buildings, roadway, mass of people, fruit, hats, street-cars, sunlight; smell and flavor of mud, smoke, restaurants, wagonload of coffee, cigars, temperature, wind, general feeling of hurry.

3. Between innings.

Field—grandstands, grass, fence, diamond.

Crowd—noise, movement, color; costume, talk, attitude, variety.

Players—movement, color; peculiarities of walk, of appearance.

4. The old swimming hole.

Water—cold? warm? clear? shallow? deep? brown? bright? rapid? slow? near? far? allowed? forbidden? bottom? smooth? rocky? fish in it?

Banks—high? low? grassy? sandy? stony? muddy? slippery? bare? shaded? lonely? frequented? green? dark? red? good for diving? good for lying in sun?

Surroundings—fields? woods? road? bridge? village? town? birds? cattle?

Swimmers—small? all ages? rough? daring? truant? bashful? tricky? Any one ever drowned?

Write two short paragraphs upon each of the following subjects. In the first, explain (make the reader understand); in the second, describe (make the reader feel):

1. Myself.
2. A classmate.
3. A classroom during recitation.
4. The house I know best.
5. The girl I walked to school with.
6. The football field.
7. An automobile.
8. The last race I saw.
9. The loneliest road.
10. My first aeroplane.
11. A bird's-eye view.
12. When the game was won in the ninth.

Describe by details of color, movement, and sound only, the following:

1. Sunset on a crowded street.
2. The laboratory.
3. When class is dismissed.
4. Just before the touchdown.
5. Ploughing on a hot day.

Describe by details of movement, odor, and flavor only, the following:

1. When the bell rings for dinner.
2. The rosebush.
3. The corner grocery.
4. Pancakes.
5. The woods at noon.

Describe each of the following from two points of view. Use details of movement, sound, etc., as well as of sight:

1. The river I know best (from a bank, early in the morning; from a boat in midstream, at noon of a hot day).
2. My small sister (when she behaves well; when she behaves badly).
3. The crowded street (from a restaurant window; from a high building).
4. The view from your window (when you are feeling gay; when you are feeling gloomy).
5. The hundred-yard dash (from the finish; from the gymnasium window, a long way off).

Describe by the narrative method the following:

1. Coming into the city by train.
2. The mountain-side.
3. The captain comes to bat and strikes out.
4. Through the canyon.
5. The union station.

6. Italian section-hands.
7. The fight.
8. Along State Street.

Describe, first by general effect and then by supporting details, the following:

1. The biggest house in town (enormous, and yet comfortable as if it had grown there. Shape; color, relation to the lay of the land: peculiar details of architecture).
2. The village I was born in. (It lies along the curve of the river, like a very broad S. School-house at one end; railroad bridge in middle; house where I was born at other end. Other details relate to these.)
3. Our dormitory.
4. My favorite tree.
5. A little lake.
6. The doctor.
7. Where I first went to school.

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